

F O U R T H E D I T I O N

THE
HUMAN
RECORD

VOLUME B



ANDREA

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THE
HUMAN RECORD

VOLUME B

Alfred J. Andrea
University of Vermont

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Preface

The fourth edition of *The Human Record: Sources of Global History* follows the pedagogical goals and academic principles that guided the first three editions. Foremost among these is our continuing commitment to the proposition that all students of history must meet the challenge of analyzing primary sources, thereby becoming active inquirers into the past. Involvement with primary-source evidence enables students to see that historical scholarship is primarily the intellectual process of drawing inferences and discovering patterns from clues yielded by the past, not of memorizing someone else's conclusions. Moreover, such analysis motivates students to learn by stimulating curiosity and imagination and helps them become critical thinkers who are comfortable with the complex challenges and ambiguities of life.

Themes and Structure

We have compiled a source collection that traces the intricate course of human history from the rise of the earliest civilizations to the present. Volume I follows the evolution of those cultures that most significantly influenced the history of the world from around 3500 B.C.E. to 1700 C.E., with emphasis on the development of the major religious, social, intellectual, and political traditions of the societies that flourished on that supercontinent known as the *Afro-Eurasian World*. Although our primary focus in Volume I is on the Eastern Hemisphere, we do not neglect the Americas. This first volume also concurrently develops the theme of the growing links and increasingly important exchanges among the world's cultures down to the early modern era. Volume II picks up this theme of growing human interconnectedness by tracing the gradual establishment of Western global hegemony; the simultaneous historical developments in other civilizations and societies around the world; the anti-Western, anticolonial movements of the twentieth century; and the emergence of today's integrated but still often bitterly divided world.

To address these themes in both the depth and breadth they deserve, we have chosen and fit into place selections that combine to present an overview of global history in mosaic form. Each source, in essence, serves two functions: It presents an intimate glimpse into some meaningful aspect of the human past and simultaneously contributes to the creation of a single large composition — an integrated history of the world. With this dual purpose in mind, we have been careful to avoid isolated sources that provide a taste of some culture or age but, by their dissociation, shed no light on patterns of cultural creation, continuity, change, and interchange — the essential components of world history.

In selecting and arranging the various pieces of our mosaic, we have sought to create a balanced picture of human history and to craft a book that reveals the contributions of the world's major cultures. We also have attempted to give our readers a collection of sources representing a wide variety of

perspectives and experiences. Believing that the study of history properly concerns every aspect of past human activity and thought, we have sought sources that mirror the practices and concerns of a wide variety of representative persons and groups.

Our pursuit of historical balance has also led us into the arena of artifactual evidence. Although most historians center their research on documents, the discipline requires us to consider all of the clues surrendered by the past, and these include its artifacts. Moreover, we have discovered that students enjoy analyzing artifacts and seem to remember vividly the conclusions they draw from them. For these reasons, we have included a number of illustrations of works of art and other artifacts, such as seals and coins, that users of this book can analyze as historical sources.

New to This Edition

We have been gratified with the positive response from colleagues and students to the first three editions of *The Human Record*. Many have taken the trouble to write or otherwise contact us to express their satisfaction. Because, however, no textbook is perfect, these correspondents have been equally generous in sharing their perceptions of how we might improve our book and meet more fully the needs of its readers. In response to such suggestions, we engaged in a major restructuring of Volume II in the second edition and an equally radical restructuring of Volume I in the third edition. Despite our overall satisfaction with these revisions, we believe that the changes incorporated in this fourth edition will make both volumes more interesting and useful to students and professors alike.

As difficult as it is to let go of sources that have proved valuable and important for us and our students (and our classroom has always been the laboratory in which we test and refine *The Human Record*), we are always searching for sources that enable us and our students to explore more fully and deeply the rich heritage of world history. For this reason, about a quarter of the sources that appear in the fourth edition are new. In Volume I, for example, we added an early Chinese text on medicine, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*, so students can make comparisons with Hippocrates' *On the Sacred Disease*, and two texts on visits to the Underworld, one from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and one from Muhammad ibn Ishaq's *The Life of the Messenger of God*, which balance similar visits in two other sources, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and Homer's *Odyssey*. To illustrate major shifts in Chinese thought in the era of the Song Dynasty, we have included excerpts from the seminal Neo-Confucian writings of Zhu Xi. A new section in Chapter 12 illustrates the world as seen from China in the thirteenth century, from Europe in the fourteenth century, and from Korea in the fifteenth century. In Volume II, we have added, among others, new selections on Ming Era Confucianism (*Meritorious Deeds at No Cost*); the colonial experience in Africa and India (G. V. Joshi, "The Economic Results of Free Trade and Railway Extension"; Charlotte Maxeke, "Social Conditions among Bantu Women and Girls"; and Kabaka Daudi Chwa, "Educa-

tion, Civilization, and ‘Foreignization’ in Buganda”); the coming of the American and French revolutions (Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, and excerpts from a prerevolutionary *cabiers*); the Zionist movement (Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Speech at the Inauguration of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem); the decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan (the Franck Report and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson’s “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb”); and the origins of the Cold War (George Kennan’s Long Telegram and Nikolai Novikov’s Telegram of September 27, 1946). Numerous sources carried over from earlier editions have been revised and reconfigured. These include the selections from the Qur’an, the *Analects* of Confucius, Gunther of Pairis’s *Constantinopolitan History*, and Marco Polo’s descriptions of his travels in Asia in Volume I; and the writings of Martin Luther, Lenin, Mao Zedong, Adam Smith, Jahangir, and Mustafa Kemal in Volume II. In keeping with our goal of providing students a rich array of artifactual sources, we have added new artwork to both volumes. To Volume I we have added examples of fifth-century B.C.E. Hellenic art, second-century C.E. Roman imperial funerary sculptures, a sixth-century Byzantine ivory, and an early fifteenth-century Korean map; and to Volume II, another woodcut from the Reformation Era. In both volumes we have attempted to reflect the most up-to-date scholarly discoveries and controversies in our work. With that in mind we have extensively revised many of our commentaries and notes. As a result, more than one-third of the pages of each volume are essentially new.

Learning Aids

Source analysis initially can be a daunting challenge for any student. With this in mind, we have labored to make these selected sources as accessible as possible by providing the student-user with a variety of aids. First there is the *Prologue*, in which we explain, initially in a theoretical manner and then through concrete examples, how a student of history interprets written and artifactual sources. Next we offer *part, chapter, section, and individual source introductions* — all to help the reader place each selection into a meaningful context and understand each source’s historical significance. Because we consider *The Human Record* to be an interpretive overview of global history and therefore a survey of the major patterns of global history that stands on its own as a text, our introductions are significantly fuller than what one normally encounters in a book of sources.

Suggested *Questions for Analysis* precede each source; their purpose is to help the student make sense of each piece of evidence and wrest from it as much insight as possible. The questions are presented in a three-tiered format designed to resemble the historian’s approach to source analysis and to help students make historical comparisons on a global scale. The first several questions are usually quite specific and ask the reader to pick out important pieces of information. These initial questions require the student to address two issues: What does this document or artifact say, and what meaningful facts can I garner from it? Addressing concrete questions of this sort prepares

the student researcher for the next, more significant level of critical thinking and analysis: drawing inferences. Questions that demand inferential conclusions follow the fact-oriented questions. Finally, whenever possible, we offer a third tier of questions that challenge the student to compare the individual or society that produced a particular source with an individual, group, or culture encountered earlier in the volume. We believe such comparisons help students fix more firmly in their minds the distinguishing cultural characteristics of the various societies they encounter in their survey of world history. Beyond that, this underscores the fact that global history is, at least on one level, comparative history.

Another form of help we offer is to *gloss the sources*, explaining fully words and allusions that first-year college students cannot reasonably be expected to know. To facilitate reading and to encourage reference, the notes appear at the bottom of the page on which they are cited. A few documents also contain *interlinear notes* that serve as transitions or provide needed information.

Some instructors might use *The Human Record* as their sole textbook. Most, however, will probably use it as a supplement to a standard narrative textbook, and many of these professors might decide not to require their students to analyze every entry. To assist instructors (and students) in selecting sources that best suit their interests and needs, we have prepared *two analytical tables of contents* for each volume. The first lists readings and artifacts by geographic and cultural area, and the second by topic. The two tables of contents suggest to professor and student alike the rich variety of material available within these pages, particularly for essays in comparative history.

In summary, our goal in crafting *The Human Record* has been to do our best to prepare the student-reader for success — *success* being defined as comfort with historical analysis, proficiency in critical thinking, learning to view history on a global scale, and a deepened awareness of the rich cultural varieties, as well as shared characteristics, of the human family.

Using The Human Record: Suggestions from the Editors

Specific suggestions for assignments and classroom activities appear in the manual entitled *Using The Human Record: Suggestions from the Editors*. In it we explain why we have chosen the sources that appear in this book and what insights we believe students should be capable of drawing from them. We also describe classroom tactics for encouraging student thought and discussion on the various sources. The advice we present is the fruit of our own use of these sources in the classroom.

Feedback

As suggested above, we are always interested in receiving comments from professors and students who are using this book. Comments on the Prologue (which appears in each volume) and Volume I should be addressed to A. J. Andrea, whose e-mail address is <aandrea@zoo.uvm.edu>; comments on

Volume II should be addressed to J. H. Overfield at <joverfie@zoo.uvm.edu>. The fact that our university's computer center decided to give the faculty an e-mail address that contains the designation "zoo" opens a line of speculation into which we dare not venture.

Acknowledgments

We are in debt to the many professionals who offered their expert advice and assistance during the various incarnations of *The Human Record*. Scholars and friends at the University of Vermont who generously shared their expertise with us over the years as we crafted these four editions include Doris Bergen, Robert V. Daniels, Carolyn Elliott, Shirley Gedeon, Eric Gilbert, William Haviland, Walter Hawthorn, Richard Horowitz, David Massell, Kristin M. Peterson-Ishaq, Abubaker Saad, Wolfe W. Schmokel, Peter Seybolt, John W. Seyller, Sean Stilwell, Mark Stoler, Marshall True, Diane Villemaire, and Denise Youngblood. We are also in debt to the many reference librarians at the University of Vermont, who have cheerfully helped us in countless ways through all four editions. Additionally, Tara Coram of the Freer and Sackler museums of the Smithsonian Institution deserves special thanks for the assistance she rendered A. J. Andrea in his exploration into the Asian art holdings of the two museums.

We wish also to acknowledge the following instructors who read and commented on portions of this edition in its earliest stages of revision: Blake Beattie, University of Louisville; Frank A. Gerome, James Madison University; Matthew Gordon, Miami University; Joseph Kirklighter, Auburn University; Robert V. Kubicek, University of British Columbia.

Finally, our debt to our beloved spouses is beyond payment, but the dedication to them of each edition of this book reflects in some small way how deeply we appreciate their constant support and good-humored tolerance.

A. J. A.
J. H. O.

Prologue



Primary Sources and How We Read Them

What Is History?

Many students believe that the study of history involves nothing more than memorizing dates, names, battles, treaties, and endless numbers of similar, often uninteresting facts with no apparent relevance to their lives and concerns. After all, so they think, the past is over and done with. Historians know what has happened, and all students have to do is absorb this body of knowledge.

But these notions are wrong. *History involves discovery and interpretation, and its content is vitally relevant to our lives.* Our understanding of history is constantly changing and deepening as historians learn more about the past by discovering new evidence as well as by re-examining old evidence with new questions and methods of analysis. Furthermore, each person who studies the past brings to it a unique perspective and raises questions that are meaningful to that individual. The drive to understand what has gone before us is innately human and springs from our need to know who we are. History serves this function of self-discovery in a special way because of its universality. In short, *the study of history deals with all aspects of past human activity and belief, for there is no subject or concern that lacks a history.* Therefore, each of us can and should explore the origins and historical evolution of whatever is most important to us. Beyond that, history exposes us to new interests, new ways of perceiving reality, and new vistas as we study cultures and times that once were quite unknown to us but which, through our study of the human past, become quite familiar to us.

Regardless of what our questions and interests, old or new, might be, the study and interpretation of our historical heritage involves coming to grips with the dynamics of the historical process. It means exploring how human societies reacted to challenges, threats, and opportunities and how they sought to reshape themselves and the world about them to meet their needs. It means exploring the complex interplay of geography, technology, religion, social structures, and a myriad of other historical factors. It means exploring the ways societies change and the ways they resist change. It means exploring the traditions that have imprinted themselves upon a culture and the ways those traditions have provided continuity over long periods of time. It means exploring the roles of individuals in shaping the course of history and the ways individuals have been shaped by historical circumstances. Indeed, the questions we ask of the past are limited only by our imaginations; the answers we

arrive at are limited only by the evidence and our ability to use that evidence thoroughly and creatively.

This collection of sources will help you discover some of the major lines of global historical development and understand many of the major cultural traditions and forces that have shaped history around the world. The word *history*, which is Greek in origin, means “learning through inquiry,” and that is precisely what historians do. They discover and interpret the past by asking questions and conducting research. Their inquiry revolves around an examination of evidence left by the past. For lack of a better term, historians call that evidence *primary source material*.

Primary Sources: Their Value and Limitations

Primary sources are records that for the most part have been passed on in written form, thereby preserving the memory of past events. These written sources include, but are not limited to, official records, law codes, private correspondence, literature, religious texts, merchants’ account books, memoirs, and the list goes on and on. No source by itself contains unadulterated truth or the whole picture. Each gives us only a glimpse of reality, and it is the historian’s task to fit these fragments of the past into a coherent picture.

Imagine for a moment that a mid-twenty-first-century historian decides to write a history of your college class. Think about the primary sources this researcher would use: the school catalogue, class lists, academic transcripts, and similar official documents; class lecture notes, course syllabi, examinations, term papers, and possibly even textbooks; diaries and private letters; the school newspaper, yearbooks, and sports programs; handbills, posters, and even photographs of graffiti; recollections written down or otherwise recorded by some of your classmates long after they graduated. With a bit of thought you could add other items to the list, among them some unwritten sources, such as recordings of popular music and photographs and videotapes of student life and activity. But let us confine ourselves, for the moment, to written records. What do all these documentary sources have in common?

Even this imposing list of sources does not present the past in its entirety. Where do we see the evidence that never made it into any written record, including long telephone calls home, e-mail notes to friends and professors, all-night study groups, afternoons spent at the student union, complaints shared among classmates about professors and courses? Someone possibly recorded memories of some of these events and opinions, but how complete and trustworthy is such evidence? Also consider that all the documents available to this future historian will be fortunate survivors. They will represent only a small percentage of the vast bulk of written material generated during your college career. Thanks to the wastebasket, the “delete” key, the disintegration of materials, and the inevitable loss of life’s memorabilia as years slip by, the evidence available to any future historian will be fragmentary. This is always the case with historical evidence. We cannot preserve the records of

the past in their totality. Clearly, the more remote the past, the more fragmentary our documentary evidence will be. Imagine the feeble chance any particular document from the twelfth century had of surviving the wars, worms, and wastebaskets of the past eight hundred years.

Now let us consider the many individual pieces of surviving documentary evidence relating to your class's history. As we review the list, we see that no single primary source gives us a complete or totally unbiased picture. Each has its perspective, value, and limitations. Imagine that the personal essays submitted by applicants for admission were a historian's only sources of information about the student body. Would it not then be reasonable for this researcher to conclude that the school attracted only the most gifted and interesting people imaginable?

Despite their flaws, however, essays composed by applicants for admission are still important pieces of historical evidence — when used judiciously. They certainly reflect the would-be students' perceptions of the school's cultural values and the types of people it hopes to attract, and usually the applicants are right on the mark because they have read the school's catalogue — itself an exercise in creative advertising. That catalogue, of course, presents an idealized picture of campus life. But it has value for the careful researcher because it reflects the values of the faculty and administrators who composed it. It also provides useful information regarding rules and regulations, courses, instructors, school organizations, and similar items. That factual information, however, is the raw material of history, not history itself, and certainly it does not reflect the full historical reality of your class's collective experience.

What is true of the catalogue is equally true of the student newspaper and every other piece of evidence pertinent to your class. Each primary source is a part of a larger whole, but as we have already seen, we do not have all the pieces. Think of historical evidence in terms of a jigsaw puzzle. Many of the pieces are missing, but it is possible to put most, though probably not all, of the remaining pieces together in a reasonable fashion to form a fairly accurate and coherent picture. The picture that emerges might not be complete (it never is), but it is useful and valid. The keys to fitting these pieces together are hard work and imagination. Each is absolutely necessary.

Examining the Sources

Hard work speaks for itself, but students are often unaware that the historian also needs imagination to reconstruct the past. After all, many students ask, doesn't history consist of strictly defined and irrefutable dates, names, and facts? Where does imagination enter into the process of learning these facts?

Again, let us consider your class's history and its documentary sources. Many of those documents provide factual data — dates, names, grades, statistics. While these data are important, individually and collectively they have no historical meaning until they have been *interpreted*. Your college class is more than a collection of statistics and facts. It is a group of individuals who, despite their differences, share and help mold a collective experience. It is a

community evolving within a particular time and place. Influenced by its environment, it is, in turn, an influence on that environment. Any valid or useful history must reach beyond dates, names, and facts and interpret the historical characteristics and role of your class. What were its values? How did it change and why? What impact did it have? These are some of the important questions a historian asks of the evidence. The answers the historian achieves help us gain insight into ourselves, our society, and our human nature.

To arrive at answers, the historian must examine each and every piece of relevant evidence in its full context and wring from that evidence as many *inferences* as possible. Facts are the foundation stones of history, but inferences are its edifices. *An inference is a logical conclusion drawn from evidence, and it is the heart and soul of historical inquiry.*

Every American schoolchild learns that "In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." That fact is worthless, however, unless the individual understands the motives, causes, and significance of this late-fifteenth-century voyage. Certainly a historian must know when Columbus sailed west. After all, time is history's framework. *Yet the questions historians ask go far beyond simple chronology.* Why did Columbus sail west? What factors made possible Spain's engagement in such enterprises at this time? Why were Europeans willing and able to exploit, as they did, the so-called New World? What were the short- and long-term consequences of the European presence in the Americas? These are some of the significant questions to which historians seek inferential answers, and those answers can only be found in the evidence.

One noted historian, Robin Winks, has written a book titled *The Historian as Detective*, and the image is appropriate although inexact. Like the detective, the historian examines clues in order to reconstruct events. The detective, however, is essentially interested in discovering what happened, who did it, and why, whereas the historian goes one step beyond and asks what it all means. *In addressing the question of meaning, the historian transforms simple curiosity about past events into a humanistic discipline.*

As a humanist, the historian seeks insight into the human condition, but that insight cannot be based on theories spun out of fantasy, wishful thinking, or preconceived notions. It must be based on a methodical and probing investigation of the evidence. Like a detective interrogating witnesses, the historian also must carefully examine the testimony of sources. First and foremost, the historian must evaluate the *validity* of the source. Is it what it purports to be? Artful forgeries have misled many historians. Even if the source is authentic (and most are), it still can be misleading. The possibility always exists that the source's author lied or deliberately misrepresented reality. Even if this is not the case, the historian can easily be led astray by not fully understanding the *perspective* reflected in the document. As any detective who has examined a number of eyewitnesses to an event knows, witnesses' reports often differ radically. The detective has the opportunity to re-examine witnesses and offer them the opportunity to change their testimony in the light

of new evidence and deeper reflection. The historian is usually not so fortunate. Even when the historian compares a piece of documentary evidence with other evidence in order to uncover its flaws, there is no way to cross-examine it. Given this fact, it is absolutely necessary for the historian to understand as fully as possible the source's perspective. Thus, the historian must ask several key questions — all of which share the letter W. *What* kind of document is this? *Who* wrote it? *For whom* and *why*? *Where* was it composed and *when*?

The *what* is important because understanding the nature of a particular source can save the historian a great deal of frustration. Many historical sources simply do not address the questions a historian would like to ask of them. That future historian would be foolish to try to learn much about the academic quality of your school's courses from a study of the registrar's class lists and grade sheets. Student and faculty class notes, copies of syllabi, examinations, papers, and textbooks would be far more useful sources.

Who, *for whom*, and *why* are equally important questions. The school catalogue undoubtedly addresses some issues pertaining to student social life. But should this document — designed to attract potential students and to place the school in the best possible light — be read and accepted uncritically? Obviously not. It must be tested against student testimony, which is discovered in such sources as private letters, memoirs, posters, the student newspaper, and the yearbook.

Where and *when* are also important questions to ask of any primary source. As a rule, distance in space and time from an event colors perceptions and can diminish the validity of a source's testimony. The recollections of a person celebrating a twenty-fifth class reunion could be insightful and valuable. Conceivably this graduate now has a perspective and information that he or she lacked a quarter of a century earlier. Just as conceivably, however, that person's memory might be playing tricks. A source can be so close to or so distant from the event it deals with that its view is distorted or totally erroneous. Even so, the source is not necessarily worthless. Often the blind spots and misinformation within a source reveal to the researcher important insights into the author's attitudes and sources of information.

The historical detective's task is difficult. In addition to constantly questioning the validity and particular perspectives of available sources, the historical researcher must often use whatever evidence is available in imaginative ways. The researcher must interpret these fragmentary and flawed glimpses of the past and piece together the resultant inferences and insights as well as possible. While recognizing that a complete picture of the past is impossible, the historian assumes the responsibility of recreating a past that is valid and has meaning for the present.

You and the Sources

This book will actively involve you in the work of historical inquiry by asking you to draw inferences based on your analysis of primary source evidence. This is

not an easy task, especially at first, but it is well within your capability. Moreover, your professor and we, the authors, will be helping you all along the way.

You realize by now that historians do not base their conclusions on analysis of a single isolated source. Historical research consists of laborious sifting through mountains of documents. We have already done much of this work for you by selecting, paring down, and annotating important sources that individually allow you to gain some significant insight into a particular issue or moment in the long and complex history of our global community. In doing this for you, we do not relieve you of the responsibility of recognizing that no single source, no matter how rich it might appear, offers a complete picture of the individual or culture that produced it. Each source that appears in this book is a piece of valuable evidence, but you should not forget that it is only partial evidence.

You will analyze two types of evidence: documents and artifacts. Each source will be authentic, so you do not have to worry about validating it. We will also supply you with the information necessary to place each piece of evidence into its proper context and will suggest questions you legitimately can and should ask of each source. If you carefully read the introductions and notes, the suggested Questions for Analysis, and, most important of all, the sources themselves — and think about what you are doing — solid inferences will follow.

To illustrate how you should go about this task and what is expected of you, we will take you through a sample exercise, step by step. We will analyze two sources: a document from the pen of Christopher Columbus and an early sixteenth-century woodcut. By the end of this exercise, if you have worked closely with us, you should be ready to begin interpreting sources on your own.

Let us now look at the document. We present it just as it would appear in any chapter of this book: first an introduction, then suggested Questions for Analysis, and finally the source itself, with explanatory notes. Because we want to give you a full introduction to the art of documentary source analysis, this excerpt is longer than most documents in this book. Also, to help you refer back to the letter as we analyze it, we have numbered each fifth line. No other sources in this book will have numbered lines. Our notes that comment on the text are probably fuller than necessary, but we prefer to err on the side of providing too much information and help rather than too little. But do not let the length of the document or its many notes intimidate you. Once you get into the source, you should find it fairly easy going.

Your first step in analyzing any source in this book is to read the introduction and the Questions for Analysis. The former places the source into context; the latter provide direction when it comes time to analyze the source. One important point to keep in mind is that every historian approaches a source with at least one question, even though it might be vaguely formulated. Like the detective, the historian wants to discover some particular truth or shed light on an issue. This requires asking specific questions of the wit-

nesses or, in the historian's case, of the evidence. These questions should not be prejudgments. One of the worst errors a historian can make is setting out to prove a point or to defend an ideological position. Questions are simply starting points, nothing else, but they are essential. Therefore, as you approach a source, have your question or questions fixed in your mind and constantly remind yourself as you work your way through a source what issue or issues you are investigating. We have provided you with a number of suggested questions for each source. Perhaps you or your professor will want to ask other questions. Whatever the case, keep focused on these questions and issues, and take notes as you read each source. Never rely on unaided memory; it will almost inevitably lead you astray.

Above all else, you must be honest and thorough as you study a source. Read each explanatory footnote carefully, lest you misunderstand a word or an allusion. Try to understand exactly what the source is saying and what its author's perspective is. Be careful not to wrench items, words, or ideas out of context, thereby distorting them. Above all, read the entire source so that you understand as fully as possible what it says and, just as important, what it does not say.

This is not as difficult as it sounds. It just takes concentration and a bit of work. To illustrate the point, let us read and analyze Christopher Columbus's letter and, in the process, try to answer the core question: What evidence is there in this document that allows us to judge Columbus's reliability as a reporter? By addressing this issue, we will actually answer questions 1–5 and 8.

“With the Royal Standard Unfurled”



▼ *Christopher Columbus,* *A LETTER CONCERNING* *RECENTLY DISCOVERED ISLANDS*

Sixteenth-century Spain's emergence as the dominant power in the Americas is forever associated with the name of a single mariner — Christopher Columbus (1451–1506). Sponsored by King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, this Genoese sea captain sailed west into the Atlantic seeking a new route to the empires of East Asia described by John Mandeville (Volume B, Chapter 2, source 102), Marco Polo (Volume B, Chapter 2, source 105), and other travel writers he had avidly read. On October 12, 1492, his fleet of three ships dropped anchor at a small Bahamian island, which Columbus claimed for Spain, naming it San Salvador. The fleet then sailed to two larger islands, which he named Juana and Española (today known as Cuba and Hispaniola).

After exploring these two islands and establishing on Española the fort of Navidad del Señor, Columbus departed for Spain in January 1493. On his way home, the admiral prepared a preliminary account of his expedition to the “Indies” for Luis de Santángel, a counselor to King Ferdinand and one of Columbus's enthusiastic supporters. In composing the letter, Columbus borrowed heavily

from his official ship's log, often lifting passages verbatim. When he landed in Lisbon in early March, Columbus dispatched the letter overland, expecting it to precede him to the Spanish royal court in faraway Barcelona, where Santángel would communicate its contents to the two monarchs. The admiral was not disappointed. His triumphal reception at the court in April was proof that the letter had served its purpose.

As you analyze the document, be aware of several facts. The admiral was returning with only two of his vessels. He had lost his flagship, the *Santa Maria*, when it was wrecked on a reef off present-day Haiti on Christmas Day. Also, many of Columbus's facts and figures reflect more his enthusiasm than dispassionate analysis. His estimates of the dimensions of the two main islands he explored grossly exaggerate their sizes, and his optimistic report of the wide availability of such riches as gold, spices, cotton, and mastic was not borne out by subsequent explorations and colonization. Although he obtained items of gold and received plenty of reports of nearby gold mines, the metal was rare in the islands. Moreover, the only indigenous spice proved to be the fiery chili pepper; the wild cotton was excellent but not plentiful; and mastic, an eastern Mediterranean aromatic gum, did not exist in the Caribbean.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Columbus's description of the physical attributes of the islands suggest about the motives for his voyage?
2. Often the eyes only see what the mind prepares them to see. Is there any evidence that Columbus saw what he wanted to see and discovered what he expected to discover?
3. Is there any evidence that Columbus's letter was a carefully crafted piece of self-promotion by a person determined to prove he had reached the Indies?
4. Is there any evidence that Columbus attempted to present an objective and fairly accurate account of what he had seen and experienced?
5. In light of your answers to questions 3 and 4, to what extent, if at all, can we trust Columbus's account?
6. What do the admiral's admitted actions regarding the natives and the ways in which he describes these people allow us to conclude about his attitudes toward these "Indians" and his plans for them?
7. What does this letter tell us about the culture of the Tainos on the eve of European expansion into their world? Is there anything that Columbus tells us about these people that does not seem to ring totally true?
8. How, if at all, does this letter illustrate that a single historical source read in isolation can mislead the researcher?

1 Sir, as I know that you will be pleased at the
great victory with which Our Lord has crowned
my voyage, I write this to you, from which you
will learn how in thirty-three days, I passed from
5 the Canary Islands to the Indies¹ with the fleet
which the most illustrious king and queen, our
sovereigns, gave to me. And there I found very
many islands filled with people² innumerable,
and of them all I have taken possession for their
10 highnesses, by proclamation made and with the
royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was
offered to me. To the first island which I found,
I gave the name *San Salvador*,³ in remembrance
of the Divine Majesty, Who has marvelously be-
15 stowed all this; the Indians call it "Guanahani."
To the second, I gave the name *Isla de Santa Maria
de Concepción*,⁴ to the third, *Fernandina*; to the
fourth, *Isabella*; to the fifth, *Isla Juana*,⁵ and so
to each one I gave a new name.

20 When I reached Juana, I followed its coast to
the westward, and I found it to be so extensive
that I thought that it must be the mainland, the
province of Catayo.⁶ And since there were nei-
ther towns nor villages on the seashore, but only
25 small hamlets, with the people of which I could
not have speech, because they all fled immedi-
ately, I went forward on the same course, think-
ing that I should not fail to find great cities and
towns. And, at the end of many leagues,⁷ seeing
30 that there was no change and that the coast was
bearing me northwards, which I wished to avoid,
since winter was already beginning, . . . [I] re-
traced my path as far as a certain harbor known
to me. And from that point, I sent two men in-
35 land to learn if there were a king or great cities.
They traveled three days' journey and found an

infinity of small hamlets and people without
number, but nothing of importance. For this rea-
son, they returned.

I understood sufficiently from other Indians, 40
whom I had already taken,⁸ that this land was
nothing but an island. And therefore I followed
its coast eastwards for one hundred and seven
leagues to the point where it ended. And from
that cape, I saw another island, distant eighteen 45
leagues from the former, to the east, to which I
at once gave the name "Española." And I went
there and followed its northern coast, as I had in
the case of Juana, to the eastward for one hun-
dred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight 50
line. This island and all the others are very fer-
tile to a limitless degree, and this island is ex-
tremely so. In it there are many harbors on the
coast of the sea, beyond comparison with others
which I know in Christendom, and many rivers, 55
good and large, which is marvelous. Its lands are
high, and there are in it very many sierras and
very lofty mountains, beyond comparison with
the island of Teneriffe.⁹ All are most beautiful,
of a thousand shapes, and all are accessible and 60
filled with trees of a thousand kinds and tall,
and they seem to touch the sky. And I am told
that they never lose their foliage, as I can under-
stand, for I saw them as green and as lovely as
they are in Spain in May, and some of them were 65
flowering, some bearing fruit, and some in an-
other stage, according to their nature. And the
nightingale was singing and other birds of a
thousand kinds in the month of November there
where I went. There are six or eight kinds of 70
palm, which are a wonder to behold on account
of their beautiful variety, but so are the other

¹An inexact term that referred to the entire area of the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

²Tainos. See Volume I, Chapter 1, source 98.

³"Holy Savior," Jesus Christ.

⁴"The Island of Holy Mary of the Immaculate Conception." Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was absolutely sinless, to the point that she was conceived without the stain of Original Sin (the sin of Adam and Eve) on her soul.

⁵Named for Prince Juan, heir apparent of Castile.

⁶The Spanish term for *Cathay*, which technically was only northern China. Columbus, however, used the term to refer to the entire Chinese Empire of the Great Khan (see note 20).

⁷A league is three miles.

⁸Columbus took seven Tainos on board at San Salvador to instruct them in Spanish and use them as guides and interpreters.

⁹One of the Canary Islands.

trees and fruits and plants. In it are marvelous pine groves, and there are very large tracts of cultivatable lands, and there is honey, and there are birds of many kinds and fruits in great diversity. In the interior are mines of metals, and the population is without number. Española is a marvel.

The sierras and mountains, the plains and arable lands and pastures, are so lovely and rich for planting and sowing, for breeding cattle of every kind, for building towns and villages. The harbors of the sea here are such as cannot be believed to exist unless they have been seen, and so with the rivers, many and great, and good waters, the majority of which contain gold. In the trees and fruits and plants, there is a great difference from those of Juana. In this island, there are many spices and great mines of gold and of other metals.

The people of this island, and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them,¹⁰ although some women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant or with a net of cotton which they make for the purpose. They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them, not because they are not well built men and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvelously timorous. They have no other arms than weapons made of canes, cut in seeding time, to the ends of which they fix a small sharpened stick. And they do not dare to make use of these, for many times it has happened that I have sent ashore two or three men to some town to have speech, and countless people have come out to them, and as soon as they have seen my men approaching they have fled, even a father not waiting for his son. And this, not because ill has been

done to anyone; on the contrary, at every point where I have been and have been able to have speech, I have given to them of all that I had, such as cloth and many other things, without receiving anything for it; but so they are, incurably timid. It is true that, after they have been reassured and have lost their fear, they are so guileless and so generous with all they possess, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. They never refuse anything which they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite anyone to share it, and display as much love as if they would give their hearts, and whether the thing be of value or whether it be of small price, at once with whatever trifle of whatever kind it may be that is given to them, with that they are content.¹¹ I forbade that they should be given things so worthless as fragments of broken crockery and scraps of broken glass, and ends of straps, although when they were able to get them, they fancied that they possessed the best jewel in the world. So it was found that a sailor for a strap received gold to the weight of two and a half *castellanos*,¹² and others much more for other things which were worth much less. As for new *blancas*,¹³ for them they would give everything which they had, although it might be two or three *castellanos*' weight of gold or an *arroba*¹⁴ or two of spun cotton. . . . They took even the pieces of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and, like savages, gave what they had, so that it seemed to me to be wrong and I forbade it. And I gave a thousand handsome good things, which I had brought, in order that they might conceive affection, and more than that, might become Christians and be inclined to the love and service of their highnesses and of the whole Castilian nation, and strive to aid us and to give

¹⁰Marco Polo described a number of islanders in South Asia who went naked. Compare also Columbus's description of this nudity with John Mandeville's account of the people of Sumatra in Volume B, Chapter 2, source 102.

¹¹Compare this with Mandeville's description of the people of Sumatra's attitude toward possessions (Volume B, Chapter 2, source 102).

¹²A gold coin of considerable value that bore the seal of Castile.

¹³The smallest and least valuable Spanish coin, it was worth about one-sixtieth of a *castellano*. Composed of billon, a mixture of copper and silver, it had a whitish hue, hence the name *blanca*, or white.

¹⁴The equivalent of about sixteen skeins, or balls, of spun textile.

us of the things which they have in abundance
 150 and which are necessary to us. And they do not
 know any creed and are not idolaters;¹⁵ only they
 all believe that power and good are in the heav-
 ens, and they are very firmly convinced that I,
 155 with these ships and men, came from the heav-
 ens, and in this belief they everywhere received
 me, after they had overcome their fear. And this
 does not come because they are ignorant; on the
 contrary, they are of a very acute intelligence and
 are men who navigate all those seas, so that it is
 160 amazing how good an account they give of ev-
 erything, but it is because they have never seen
 people clothed or ships of such a kind.

And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the
 first island which I found, I took by force some
 165 of them, in order that they might learn and give
 me information of that which there is in those
 parts, and so it was that they soon understood
 us, and we them, either by speech or signs, and
 they have been very serviceable. I still take them
 170 with me, and they are always assured that I come
 from Heaven, for all the intercourse which they
 have had with me; and they were the first to an-
 nounce this wherever I went, and the others went
 running from house to house and to the neigh-
 175 boring towns, with loud cries of, "Come! Come
 to see the people from Heaven!" So all, men and
 women alike, when their minds were set at rest
 concerning us, came, so that not one, great or
 small, remained behind, and all brought some-
 180 thing to eat and drink, which they gave with
 extraordinary affection. In all the island, they
 have very many canoes, like rowing *fustas*,¹⁶ some
 larger, some smaller, and some are larger than a

fusta of eighteen benches. They are not so broad,
 because they are made of a single log of wood, 185
 but a *fusta* would not keep up with them in row-
 ing, since their speed is a thing incredible. And
 in these they navigate among all those islands,
 which are innumerable, and carry their goods.
 One of these canoes I have seen with seventy and 190
 eighty men in her, and each one with his oar.

In all these islands, I saw no great diversity in
 the appearance of the people or in their manners
 and language. On the contrary, they all under-
 stand one another,¹⁷ which is a very curious thing, 195
 on account of which I hope that their highnesses
 will determine upon their conversion to our holy
 faith, towards which they are very inclined.

I have already said how I have gone one hun-
 dred and seven leagues in a straight line from 200
 west to east along the seashore of the island Juana,
 and as a result of that voyage, I can say that this
 island is larger than England and Scotland to-
 gether, for, beyond these one hundred and seven
 leagues, there remain to the westward two prov- 205
 inces to which I have not gone. One of these prov-
 inces they call "Avan,"¹⁸ and there the people
 are born with tails;¹⁹ and these provinces cannot
 have a length of less than fifty or sixty leagues,
 as I could understand from those Indians whom 210
 I have and who know all the islands.

The other, Española, has a circumference
 greater than all Spain, . . . since I voyaged along
 one side one hundred and eighty-eight great
 leagues in a straight line from west to east. It is 215
 a land to be desired and, seen, it is never to be
 left. And . . . I have taken possession for their
 highnesses . . . in this Española, in [a] situation

¹⁵Normally the term *idolater* means anyone who worships idols, or sacred statues, but it is unclear exactly what Columbus means here. The Tainos worshipped a variety of deities and spirits known as *cemis*, whom they represented in stone statues and other handcrafted images, also known as *cemis*. For further information on Taino *cemis* see Volume B, Chapter 1, source 98. It is hard to imagine Columbus's not having seen carved *cemis*, which filled the Tainos' villages. To compound the problem of what Columbus meant by their not being idolaters, consider lines 297–299 of this letter, where the admiral refers to idolaters who will be enslaved.

¹⁶A small oared boat, often having one or two masts.

¹⁷This is not totally accurate. Columbus's Taino interpreters knew only a little of the language of the Ciguayos whom the admiral encountered on Española in January 1493 (see note 27).

¹⁸Which the Spaniards transformed into La Habana, or Havana.

¹⁹Marco Polo reported the existence of tailed humans in the islands of Southeast Asia. In his description of the various fantastic people who supposedly inhabited the islands of Southeast Asia, John Mandeville listed hairy persons who walked on all fours and climbed trees.

most convenient and in the best position for the
 220 mines of gold and for all intercourse as well with
 the mainland . . . belonging to the Grand Khan,²⁰
 where will be great trade and gain. I have taken
 possession of a large town, to which I gave the
 name *Villa de Navidad*,²¹ and in it I have made
 225 fortifications and a fort, which now will by this
 time be entirely finished, and I have left in it
 sufficient men for such a purpose with arms and
 artillery and provisions for more than a year, and
 a *fusta*, and one, a master of all seacraft, to build
 230 others, and great friendship with the king of that
 land, so much so, that he was proud to call me,
 and to treat me as a brother. And even if he were
 to change his attitude to one of hostility towards
 these men, he and his do not know what arms
 235 are and they go naked, as I have already said,
 and are the most timorous people that there are
 in the world, so that the men whom I have left
 there alone would suffice to destroy all that land,
 and the island is without danger for their per-
 240 sons, if they know how to govern themselves.²²

In all these islands, it seems to me that all men
 are content with one woman, and to their chief
 or king they give as many as twenty.²³ It appears
 to me that the women work more than the men.
 245 And I have not been able to learn if they hold
 private property; what seemed to me to appear

was that, in that which one had, all took a share,
 especially of eatable things.²⁴

In these islands I have so far found no human
 monstrosities, as many expected,²⁵ but on the 250
 contrary the whole population is very well-
 formed, nor are they negroes as in Guinea,²⁶ but
 their hair is flowing, and they are not born where
 there is intense force in the rays of the sun; it is
 true that the sun has there great power, . . . 255

As I have found no monsters, so I have had no
 report of any, except in an island "Quaris," the
 second at the coming into the Indies, which is
 inhabited by a people who are regarded in all
 the islands as very fierce and who eat human flesh. 260
 They have many canoes with which they range
 through all the islands of India and pillage and
 take as much as they can.²⁷ They are no more
 malformed than the others, except that they have
 the custom of wearing their hair long like 265
 women, and they use bows and arrows of the same
 cane stems, with a small piece of wood at the
 end, owing to lack of iron which they do not
 possess. They are ferocious among these other
 people who are cowardly to an excessive degree, 270
 but I make no more account of them than of the
 rest. These are those who have intercourse with
 the women of "Matinino," which is the first
 island met on the way from Spain to the Indies,

²⁰The Mongol emperor of Cathay. Columbus did not know that the Mongol khans had been expelled from power in China in 1368.

²¹"Village of the Nativity" (of the Lord). The destruction of the *Santa Maria* off the coast of Española on Christmas Day (Navidad del Señor) forced Columbus to leave behind thirty-nine sailors at the village garrison, which he named after the day of the incident.

²²When Columbus returned to Española in November 1493, he discovered the fortification burned to the ground and all thirty-nine men dead. Almost as soon as Columbus had sailed away, the Spaniards began fighting among themselves and split into factions, with only eleven remaining to garrison the fort. The widely scattered groups of Spaniards were wiped out by Tainos led by a chief named Caonabó. Guacanagarí, the king to whom Columbus refers, apparently was wounded trying to defend the Spaniards.

²³Generally only chiefs could afford large numbers of wives because of the substantial bride prices that were paid, in goods or services, to the families of the women. Notwithstanding, many commoners could and did have two or three wives.

²⁴See note 11.

²⁵Europeans were prepared to find various races of monstrous humans and semi-humans in the Indies. Accepted accounts of the wonders of the East, such as the travelogue of John Mandeville, told of dog-headed people and a species of individuals who, lacking heads, had an eye on each shoulder. These stories had been inherited from ancient Greek, Roman, and Arabic ethnographies.

²⁶Sub-Saharan West Africa (see Volume B, Chapter 2, source 111).

²⁷These were the Caribs, who shortly before the arrival of Columbus began to displace the Arawak peoples of the Lesser Antilles, the archipelago to the east and south of Hispaniola. Sixteenth-century Spanish writers unanimously agreed that the Caribs were fierce warriors and cannibalistic. On January 13, 1493, Columbus and his men had a short skirmish on Española with some previously unknown natives, who the admiral incorrectly assumed were Caribs. They were actually Ciguayos, who were less peaceful than the Tainos.

275 in which there is not a man. The women
engage in no feminine occupation, but use
bows and arrows of cane, like those already
mentioned, and they arm and protect them-
selves with plates of copper, of which they have
280 much.²⁸

In another island, which they assure me is
larger than Española, the people have no hair.²⁹
In it, there is gold incalculable, and from it and
from the other islands, I bring with me Indians
285 as evidence.³⁰

In conclusion, to speak only of that which has
been accomplished on this voyage, which was so
hasty, their highnesses can see that I will give
them as much gold as they may need, if their
290 highnesses will render me very slight assistance;
moreover, spice and cotton, as much as their
highnesses shall command; and mastic,³¹ as much
as they shall order to be shipped and which, up to
now, has been found only in Greece, in the island
295 of Chios,³² and the Seignory³³ sells it for what it
pleases; and aloe wood, as much as they shall
order to be shipped, and slaves, as many as they
shall order to be shipped and who will be from
the idolaters.³⁴ And I believe that I have found
300 rhubarb and cinnamon,³⁵ and I shall find a thou-
sand other things of value, which the people

whom I have left there will have discovered, for
I have not delayed at any point, so far as the wind
allowed me to sail, except in the town of Navidad,
in order to leave it secured and well established, 305
and in truth, I should have done much more, if
the ships had served me, as reason demanded.

This is enough . . . and the eternal God, our
Lord, Who gives to all those who walk in His way
triumph over things which appear to be impos- 310
sible, and this was notably one; for, although men
have talked or have written of these lands, all
was conjectural, without suggestion of ocular
evidence, but amounted only to this, that those
who heard for the most part listened and judged 315
it to be rather a fable than as having any vestige
of truth. So that, since Our Redeemer³⁶ has given
this victory to our most illustrious king and
queen, and to their renowned kingdoms, in so
great a matter, for this all Christendom ought to 320
feel delight and make great feasts and give sol-
emn thanks to the Holy Trinity³⁷ with many sol-
emn prayers for the great exaltation which they
shall have, in the turning of so many people to
our holy faith, and afterwards for temporal 325
benefits,³⁸ for not only Spain but all Christians
will have hence refreshment and gain.

²⁸The same account appears in Columbus's log. Father Ramón Pane, who composed an ethnographic study of Taino culture during Columbus's second voyage of 1493–1494 (see Volume B, Chapter 1, source 98), also related in great detail the legend of the island of Matinino, where only women resided. The story, as reported by Pane, however, contains no hint that they were warlike women. Apparently Columbus took this Taino legend and combined it with the Greco-Roman myth of the warrior Amazons (see Volume A, Chapter 4, source 31). Mandeville wrote of the land of Amazonia, populated totally by warrior women, and Marco Polo described two Asian islands, one inhabited solely by women and another exclusively by men. There is no evidence that this female society reported by Columbus and Pane ever existed in the Caribbean. The Tainos, however, who were essentially a stone-age people, did import from South America an alloy of copper and gold, which they used for ornaments.

²⁹John Mandeville described people with little body hair, and Marco Polo told of Buddhist monks whose heads and faces were shaved.

³⁰Columbus brought seven Tainos back to Spain, where they were baptized, with King Ferdinand and Prince Juan act-

ing as godparents. One remained at the Spanish court, where he died, and the others returned with Columbus on his second voyage of 1493.

³¹Columbus and his men wrongly identified a native gumbo-limbo tree, which contains an aromatic resin, with the rare mastic tree, whose costly resin was a profitable trade item for Genoa (see note 33).

³²An island in the eastern Mediterranean.

³³The ruling body of Genoa, an Italian city-state. Chios was a possession of Genoa, whose merchants controlled the mastic trade.

³⁴Church law forbade the enslavement of Christians, except in the most exceptional circumstances.

³⁵Actually, when members of the crew showed Columbus what they thought were aloe, mastic, and cinnamon, the admiral accepted the aloe and mastic as genuine but rejected the supposed cinnamon. One of his lieutenants reported seeing rhubarb while on a scouting expedition.

³⁶Jesus Christ.

³⁷The Christian belief of three divine persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — contained in a single divine essence.

³⁸Benefits that are of this world and last only for a time, as opposed to eternal, or heavenly, rewards.

This in accordance with that which has been accomplished, thus briefly.

on the fifteenth of February, in the year one thousand four hundred and ninety-three.

330 Done in the caravel,³⁹ off the Canary Islands,

At your orders.

El Almirante.⁴⁰

333

³⁹A Spanish ocean-going ship.

⁴⁰The Admiral.

Interpreting Columbus's Letter

Columbus's letter contains a number of interesting facts. For example, the natives Columbus encountered constructed seaworthy canoes and communicated with one another through inter-island travel (lines 181–191). Yet as fascinating and important as such facts are, reading a source with an eye toward garnering tidbits of information is not historical analysis in its fullest sense. *True historical analysis consists of drawing inferential insights from a source and trying to answer, at least in part, the central question of historical study: What does it all mean?* This document allows us to do just that.

Historians use no secret method or magic formula to draw historical insights from their evidence. All they need are attention to detail, thoroughness, common sense, and a willingness to enter imaginatively into the mind of the source's author as fully and honestly as possible, while trying to set aside personal values and perspectives. Anyone who is willing to work at it can profitably interpret primary sources.

The researcher always has to evaluate the worth of each source, which means understanding its point of view and reliability. In this letter several things are obvious. Columbus believed he had reached Asian islands (lines 5–23). Marco Polo, John Mandeville, and other writers had provided a number of reference points by which to recognize the Orient (notes 10, 11, 19, 25, 28, and 29), and Columbus believed he had found many of them. Equally obvious is that Columbus tried to present his discoveries in the best light possible. He sent this letter ahead to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella to ensure that when he arrived he would be received with due honor.

Certainly there is exaggeration, self-puffery, error, and possibly even deliberate distortion in this account. As the introduction to the letter informs us, he overestimated the size of several islands (lines 199–206 and 212–215) and, except for chilies, the spices he claimed to have discovered (lines 89, 291, and 299–300) were not there. The admiral also failed to mention that the *Santa Maria* had been lost. Columbus could not escape informing his royal patrons of this unhappy incident, but presumably he wanted to wait until he was at the court, where he could put his own spin on the facts surrounding the incident. Also not mentioned is a skirmish that he and his men had on January 13, 1493, with some hostile strangers, whom he incorrectly assumed were Caribs (note 27). Perhaps that incident, if reported without explanation, would weaken the admiral's implied claim that Spain could easily subjugate these

timid Indians (lines 97–110 and 232–240). Generally, however, despite Columbus's enthusiasm and understandable tendency to exaggerate, to conveniently neglect to mention anything negative, and to see what he wanted to see, the admiral *seems* to have wanted to present an essentially factual account.

One indication of this is how Columbus described the people of these islands. His reading of popular travel accounts had prepared him to encounter every sort of human monstrosity (note 25), and undoubtedly he would have enjoyed reporting such contacts. But he honestly reported that all the natives he encountered were quite unmonstrous in appearance and temperament (lines 249–252). Of course, he reported stories of people with tails, cannibals, and warlike women who lived apart from men (lines 206–211 and 256–282), but it is unlikely that the admiral was deliberately misleading anyone on this issue. The Carib cannibals were real enough. Rumors of tailed people and latter-day Amazons conceivably were nothing more than the natives trying to please Columbus or simply the result of poor communication. It is not difficult to imagine that the admiral inquired after the locations of the various human curiosities whom Mandeville, Polo, and others had placed in the islands of the Indian Ocean, and the Tainos, not knowing what he was asking, agreeably pointed across the waters to other islands.

In fact, this raises one issue that has long vexed us and which goes straight to the heart of the question of this source's overall reliability. *How well was Columbus able to communicate with these people?* Columbus insisted that through gestures and learned words the Spaniards and Tainos were able to communicate with one another (lines 163–169), and he certainly learned enough of the Tainos' language to report that they called the island on which he initially landed *Guanabani* (line 15). Nevertheless, we suspect that, despite Columbus's use of captive interpreters, only the most primitive forms of communication were possible between the Europeans and the Native Americans in 1492–1493. Therefore, we should have a healthy skepticism about anything that Columbus reports about the Tainos' beliefs and cosmological perspectives (for example, lines 150–156 and 169–176).

Still, all things considered, it seems reasonable to conclude that Columbus's letter can be accepted as a generally honest, if not totally accurate, account of his discoveries and experiences. That basic honesty, compromised to an extent by an understandable enthusiasm to present his accomplishments positively, comes through in his attempt to describe the islands' physical qualities and the people he encountered. The picture that emerges tells us a great deal about the complex motives that underlay his great adventure.

We notice that Columbus had taken possession of the lands in the names of the Spanish monarchs and even renamed the islands, without once giving thought to the claims of anyone else (lines 7–19). He also thought nothing of seizing some natives as soon as he arrived (lines 40–41 and 163–169) and of bringing several Indians back to Spain (lines 284–285). Moreover, he noted toward the end of his letter that the monarchs of Spain could obtain as many *slaves* as they desired from among the islands' *idolaters* (lines 297–299). At the

same time (and this might strike the modern student as curious), Columbus claimed that he had acted generously and protectively toward the native people (lines 111–115 and 127–132), and his letter conveys a tone of admiration and even affection for the people whom he had encountered. Indeed, the admiral expressed a deep interest in winning over the native people of the Indies in an avowed hope that they might become Catholic Christians and loyal subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella (lines 143–150), and he even claimed that they were strongly inclined toward religious conversion (lines 194–198). Yet the very qualities that, as Columbus implied, made the Tainos prime candidates for conversion — intelligence, timidity, naiveté, generosity, ignorance, technological backwardness, lack of an articulated religious creed, an ability to communicate freely among themselves, and a sense of wonder at the Europeans — also made them ripe for subjugation.

The tone of this letter suggests that Columbus was concerned with these people as humans and was genuinely interested in helping them achieve salvation through conversion. It is equally clear, however, that Columbus believed he and Catholic Spain had a right and duty to subjugate and exploit these same people. Such tension continued throughout the Spanish colonial experience in the Americas.

Subjugation of the Indians and their lands involved more than just a sense of divine mission and Christian altruism — as real as those motives were. Columbus, his royal patrons, and most others who joined overseas adventures expected to gain in earthly wealth as well (see especially lines 317–327). Even a superficial reading of his letter reveals the admiral's preoccupation with the riches of the islands — riches that it seems he knowingly exaggerated (note 35). Gold, spices, cotton, aromatic mastic, and, of course, slaves were the material rewards that awaited Christian Europeans, and Columbus was fully interested in them and wanted Ferdinand and Isabella to underwrite future trips so that he could discover them in abundance (lines 286–307). So exaggeration can be found in this account, but it seems to be exaggeration based on conviction.

Was Columbus being cynical, hypocritical, or deliberately ironic when in his closing words he claimed that Jesus Christ had provided this great victory to the Spanish monarchs (and indeed to all Christendom) and from that victory would flow the dual benefits of the conversion of so many people and worldly riches (lines 317–327)? Cynicism, hypocrisy, and conscious irony are not likely explanations. It seems more likely that these closing remarks reveal the mind of a man who saw no contradiction between spreading the faith and benefiting materially from that action, even if doing so meant exploiting the converts.

Please note that in presenting this insight, we have tried to avoid moral judgments. This does not mean that we accept slavery as justifiable or believe it is proper to dispossess people of their lands and cultures. What it does mean is that we are trying to understand Columbus and his world view and not to sit in judgment of a man whose values in some respects were radically different from our own. Passing moral judgment on a distant society's values

and the actions that resulted from them might be emotionally satisfying, but it will not change what has happened. Doing so also could conceivably blind the judge to the historical context in which those actions took place. As suggested earlier, *we study the past in order to gain insight and wisdom regarding the human condition. If that insight is to have any validity whatsoever, it must be based on as dispassionate a study of the evidence as possible.*

Another point merits mention. Perhaps you disagree with our conclusion that Columbus's letter is basically an honest and valuable source, despite its shortcomings. Well, if you do, you are in excellent company. Two eminent historians — William D. Phillips, Jr., and Carla Rahn Phillips, in their book *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* — characterize this letter as “a tissue of exaggerations, misconceptions, and outright lies.” We obviously disagree in our interpretation of the degree, nature, and extent of the letter's misstatements. No historian is infallible, and certainly we do not claim that distinction. Moreover, no source is so clear in all respects that it lacks areas of potential disagreement for historians. That, in fact, is one of the exciting aspects of historical research. Despite all the facts and conclusions that historians generally agree on, there are numerous areas in which they carry on spirited debate. *The very nature of history's fragmentary, flawed evidence makes debate inevitable.*

What is more, no historian can possibly see everything there is to be seen in every source. What this means, so far as you are concerned, is that *there is plenty of latitude in the sources that appear in this book for you to arrive at valid insights that are unique to you.* In so doing, however, you must at all times attempt to divorce yourself of present-mindedness and to enter imaginatively into the world of the author whose work you are analyzing. You will note that, as is the case with this letter from Columbus, throughout this book we have endeavored to help you do this by means of suggested Questions for Analysis. Use these questions for guidance, but do not be constrained by them. If you find a question inappropriate, misleading, or wrong-headed in its assumptions, feel free to follow your own mind. Just be ready to defend the questions you have chosen to ask along with the conclusions you have reached in answering them.

We can ask many other questions of Columbus's letter and garner other insights from it. Certainly it tells us a lot about Taino culture. Despite his cultural blinders, his naiveté, his tendency to see what he wanted to see, and his probably exaggerated belief in his ability to communicate with these people, Columbus seems to be a reasonably accurate and perceptive observer. Thus anyone interested in Caribbean cultures before the Europeans had much of a chance to influence them must necessarily look to this and similar accounts of first contacts. In fact, it would be good practice for you, right now, to try to answer question 7, which we have deliberately left unanswered. You will be surprised at how much you can learn about the Tainos from this brief description. As you do this exercise, however, do not forget to ask yourself constantly: How reliable does Columbus appear to be on this specific point, and what is the basis for my conclusion?

After you have tested your own powers of historical analysis in this exercise, it would be wise to put the letter aside for the present. We trust that by now you have a good idea of how to examine and mine a documentary source. Now let us consider artifacts.

Unwritten Sources

Historians distinguish between the prehistorical and historical past, with the chief defining feature of any historical culture being that it provides written records from which we can reconstruct its past. Without a large volume and variety of documentary sources, it is impossible to write any society's history in detail. This is not to say that the unwritten relics of the past are worthless. Archeology proves their value, and even historians use such sources. As a rule, however, no matter how extensive a culture's physical remains might be, if it has not left us records we can read, its history largely remains a closed book.

Given the central role documents play in our reconstruction of the past, it should surprise no one to learn that most historians concentrate their research almost exclusively on written sources. Yet historians would be foolish to overlook *any* piece of evidence from the past. As suggested earlier, photographs could be a rich source for anyone researching the history of your class. That future historian might also want to study all of the extant souvenirs and supplies sold in your school's bookstore. Examined properly they could help fill in some gaps in the story of your class's cultural history.

Artifacts can be illuminating, particularly when used in conjunction with written records. Coins can tell us a lot about a society's ideals or its leaders' programs. Art in its many forms can reveal the interests, attitudes, and perceptions of various segments of society, from the elites to the masses. More down-to-earth items, such as domestic utensils and tools, allow us to infer quite a bit about the lives of common individuals. In this book we concentrate largely on written sources, for reasons already outlined. It would be wrong, however, if we totally overlooked artifacts. So, scattered throughout these chapters you will find important pieces of unwritten evidence. Let us look at an example and proceed to interpret it.

The Family Dinner



▼ *AN ANONYMOUS WOODCUT OF 1511*

Columbus arrived in Barcelona in April 1493 to learn not only had his letter arrived, but it had already been published and publicly circulated. Within months the letter was translated into several languages; the Latin translation alone went through nine editions, several of which were lavishly illustrated, before the end of 1494. Printers discovered that educated Europeans had an almost insatiable



desire to learn about the peoples and lands Columbus and other explorers were discovering, and they catered to that interest. Their clientele wanted not only to read about the fascinating peoples, plants, and animals of these lands — they wanted also to see them. Consequently, as books on the new explorations proliferated, so did the number of printed illustrations. Many are fanciful and tell us more about the Europeans who created them than the peoples and regions they supposedly portrayed. The woodcut print we have chosen appeared in a popular English pamphlet of 1511.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What scene has the artist set? What has the artist placed to the immediate right of the standing man, and what function does it have in this scene?

2. What do each person's actions, dress, and demeanor tell us about her or him?
3. What does this illustration tell us about popular European notions concerning the natives of the New World?

Interpreting the Woodcut

What a charming, even idyllic domestic scene! An attractive mother nurses an infant at her breast while amusing an older child with a feather. A well-muscled, equally attractive, and proud father stands nearby, holding the tools of his trade while next to him the family's dinner is slowly cooking. Dinner, of course, may strike us as macabre, as these are cannibals, and it looks like roast European is on the menu. The tools of the father's trade are weapons. Both children are naked, and the parents are virtually nude, save for what appear to be leaves that cover their loins, decorative necklaces, armbands and anklets of some indeterminate material, and feathers in their long and unkempt hair.

What is the message? What we have is a reprise of the image provided by Columbus in his letter of 1493: the *noble savage*. These are fully human beings with human bonds and affections. Yet they are still savages, as their clothing (or lack of it), decorations, hair styles, weapons, and choice of food would have suggested to most sixteenth-century Europeans. Here, as Columbus and many of those who followed agreed, were a people who could become Christians but who also, by virtue of their backwardness, were to be subjugated. There is something appealing about their innocent savagery, but what of that poor fellow whose severed leg and head are slowly roasting?

Have we read too much into the woodcut? It is arguable that we may have. The historian always faces this problem when trying to analyze an isolated piece of evidence, particularly a nonverbal source. Yet this artifact is not completely isolated, for we brought to its analysis insight gained from documentary evidence — Columbus's letter. That is how we generally read the artifacts of historical cultures. We attempt to place them in the context of what we have already learned or inferred from documentary sources. Documents illuminate artifacts, and artifacts make more vivid and tangible the often shadowy world of words.

As you attempt to interpret the unwritten sources in this book, keep in mind what you have learned from the documents you have already read, your textbook, and class lectures. Remember that we have chosen these artifacts to illustrate broad themes and general trends. You should not find their messages overly subtle. As with the documents, always try to place each piece of nonverbal evidence into its proper context, and in that regard, read the introductions and Questions for Analysis very carefully. We will do our best to provide you with all the information and clues you need.

Good luck and have fun!

Chapter 1

Africa and the Americas

As we saw in Chapter 5 (Vol. A), toward the end of the first century B.C.E. the dominant civilizations of Eurasia and North Africa were loosely linked through a series of trade networks and imperialistic adventures. The result was the first Afro-Eurasian Ecumene, or universal community, whose heyday extended down to about 200 C.E. The term itself is somewhat misleading, however, because most of Africa south of the Sahara Desert lay outside of this first ecumene of the so-called Old World.

The cultures of the so-called New World — the Americas — also did not participate in that first age of Afro-Eurasian linkage, nor in the second, which peaked between 1250 and 1350. A few adventurers and lost sailors from Africa and Eurasia undoubtedly stumbled across the lands of America prior to 1492, as was the case with a handful of Vikings who set up a short-lived colony in northern Newfoundland around 1000 C.E. Nevertheless, there is no convincing evidence that these occasional visitors established any meaningful links between the Americas and the outside world, nor is there reason to believe that they had any substantial impact on the development of Amerindian cultures. Prior to the late fifteenth century C.E., the American peoples developed their societies and civilizations in essential isolation from the lands that lay across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Isolated though they might have been from the rest of the world, most Amerindian peoples were linked, although loosely, in an *American Ecumene* that made possible the spread of goods and cultural influences over vast expanses. Maize, for example, initially domesticated as early as 4000 B.C.E. in the highlands of central Mexico, had spread to Peru by 2000 B.C.E. and Canada by 1000 C.E.

Sub-Saharan Africa also had its early cultural and trade networks, which made possible a widespread diffusion of such technologies as agriculture and iron metallurgy and such ideas as the faith of Islam. Moreover, despite the continued growth of the Sahara Desert from around 2500 B.C.E. to the present, interior Africa has never been totally cut off from the rest of the Afro-Eurasian World, even in the most ancient times. However, the volume of traffic across the Sahara only began to achieve significant proportions after the introduction into North Africa of the Arabian, or single-humped, camel as a beast of burden during the early centuries C.E. Conquest of western North Africa by Muslim Arabs in the seventh century provided another major boost to trans-Saharan trade, so that by about the year 1000, four major commercial routes connected the north with western sub-Saharan Africa. Gold, more than any other single item, drew the camel caravans of Berber and Arab traders to the inland kingdoms of West Africa's grasslands, but large numbers of slaves were also sold for transportation northward to markets throughout the Mediterranean and beyond. In return, western sub-Saharan Africans received salt, raw copper, fine horses, and such manufactured goods as tempered steel and even glassware from Venice.

Trade and the development of trade-based Islamic states in the western sub-Saharan grasslands constitute a major chapter in Africa's history, but they are not the whole story of what was happening during the millennium 500–1500 C.E. in this richly diverse continent. East Africa, especially its coastal region from Somalia to Tanzania, was linked to a shipping network of monsoon-driven vessels that sailed throughout the Indian Ocean and its adjacent waters — all the way to China. Commodities such as ivory and gold made their way from the interior of East Africa to ports on the Indian Ocean, where they joined such coastal raw materials as ambergris (a resin used in the production of perfumes) and mangrove timber. At these emporia, which dotted the islands off the eastern coast, East Africa's goods were exchanged for pottery from China, glassware, and Indian textiles. In addition, captives taken in war and by raiding parties were brought to the coast, where they were sold to Arab slavers for exportation to the mines and plantations of Iraq. For better and for worse, Africa was increasingly becoming linked to the Eurasian World between 500 and 1500.

Africa

During the millennium from 500 to 1500 Africa witnessed a number of important historical developments. Chief among them were the last stages of the *Bantu Expansion*, the coming of Islam, the creation of trade empires in the western Sudan, the rise of a *Swahili* culture in East Africa, and the arrival of Europeans toward the end of this period.

The approximately 450 languages belonging to the *Bantu* linguistic family that are spoken today throughout most of the southern half of the continent are traceable to a common place of origin in West Africa, probably in present eastern Nigeria. Bantu speakers probably began spreading out of their ancestral homeland as early as three or four thousand years ago, aided by their skills in fishing and agriculture. In its later stages, this slow, almost imperceptible movement was aided by their iron-working skills. As they spread east and south, the Bantu-speaking peoples introduced wherever they settled the crafts of farming and iron metallurgy. By the early centuries C.E. Bantu speakers had pushed as far south as the region today occupied by the nation of Zimbabwe, where by the late thirteenth century they constructed a gold-trade civilization centered on the now famous Great Zimbabwe stone citadel, from which the modern state took its name in 1979.

Another great migration that profoundly influenced Africa's history was the influx of Islam in the wake of the conquering Arab armies that swept through North Africa in the seventh century. These conquests and the conversions that followed transformed what had been Christian North Africa into an integral part of the Islamic World, thereby wrenching it out of the orbits of Constantinople and Rome and tying it culturally to Mecca, Damascus, and Baghdad.

From North Africa the faith and culture of Islam penetrated into the trade empires of the western grassland states south of the Sahara after 1000 C.E. The empires of *Ghana*, *Mali*, and *Songhai* became progressively more Islamic and, therefore, more closely tied to North Africa and the greater Islamic World beyond Africa by reason of a shared religious culture, as well as by commercial interests.

On the east coast of Africa a similar phenomenon was at work. In the ninth and tenth centuries Arab sailor-merchants established trading settlements far down the coast of East Africa. The culture that emerged from the interchange between the Arabic and East African peoples who traded and intermarried here is known as *Swahili* (from the Arabic word for "coast" — *sabil*). Like *Kiswahili*, the language of the region, Swahili culture was a coastal trade culture consisting of an indigenous Bantu base with strong Arabic influences. From about 1200 to the early sixteenth century, the port city of *Kilwa*, today located in the nation of Tanzania, served as the Swahili coast's main emporium.

Kilwa's commercial prominence along Africa's eastern shore ended with its sack and destruction by the Portuguese in 1505. With the arrival in force of the

Portuguese, first on Africa's west coast in the fifteenth century and then on the east coast in the early sixteenth century, the age of direct European contact with sub-Saharan Africa had begun, with all of the consequences that would follow from that interchange.

Despite the impact of Islam and Europe on Africa south of the Sahara, older ways of life proved usually resilient to influences from outside. *Ethiopia*, for example, successfully resisted Islamic and later Portuguese attempts at conquest and conversion, retaining its autonomy and ancient Christian culture. Likewise, the coastal states of West Africa retained their core cultural features, even as their leaders accepted the faith of Islam. Moreover, they maintained autonomy, extensive political authority, and widespread economic interests, even in the face of the European presence along their coastline.

The Land of Zanj: Tenth-Century East Africa



93 ▼ *Abu'l-Hasan Ali al-Mas'udi,* *MEADOWS OF GOLD*

To ancient Greek and Roman geographers, the coastal region of eastern Africa was known as *Azania*. The Arabs who traded along this coast knew it as the *Land of Zanj*, a name that survives in *Zanzibar*, an island that comprises part of the modern nation of Tanzania. Following the monsoon winds of the Indian Ocean, which blow toward East Africa between November and March, Arab merchants sailed from Oman and other regions of the Arabian Peninsula and visited trading ports that stretched southward from Mogadishu in Somalia to Sofala, which is located in the modern nation of Mozambique. At these trading centers, the Arabs met sailors from India and the islands of Southeast Asia, as well as colonists from Arabia and Persia, many of whom had intermarried with Africans. Because of the presence of Arabic speakers along this coast, the Arab merchants who visited the region found little difficulty in conducting commerce, apart from the normal hazards of venturing long distances across treacherous ocean waters in small vessels. After acquiring their desired raw materials, Arab merchants returned home or else sailed to India, driven by monsoon winds that blow northeastward between April and October.

One of the earliest Arabic accounts of East African society and its trade comes from the pen of Abu'l-Hasan Ali al-Mas'udi (ca. 890–956), who visited the region in 915/916. In his masterwork of history and geography, *Meadows of Gold*, which he composed in 943, al-Mas'udi informs his reader of the Indian Ocean trade network into which the Land of Zanj was interwoven and of the people of interior East Africa, who fed that trade. How much of what he tells us about the people of Zanj is fact and how much is the stuff of distorted legend is open to question. What is clear and undisputed is the picture that al-Mas'udi draws of the importance of Africa's east coast to foreign merchants.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What evidence does al-Mas'udi provide of the evolving Swahili culture of this region?
2. What are the dangers of the voyage to the Land of Zanj? What are the rewards?
3. Describe the ivory trade that originated in East Africa.
4. What does al-Mas'udi tell us about the culture of the Bantu people of the interior? Which elements seem the most believable? Why? Which seem the least believable? Why?
5. Review the story of Sinbad (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 78). Does al-Mas'udi's account place the story into a clearer context? If so, what is that context?

The pilots of Oman¹ pass by the channel [of Berbera] to reach the island of Kanbalu,² which is in the Zanj sea.³ It has a mixed population of Muslims and Zanj idolaters.⁴ . . . The aforesaid Kanbalu is the farthest point of their voyages on the Zanj sea, and the land of Sofala and the Waqwaq,⁵ on the edge of the Zanj mainland and at the end of this branch of the sea. The people of Siraf⁶ also make this voyage, and I myself have sailed on this sea, setting off from Sanjar, the capital of Oman, in company with a number of Omani shipowners, among whom were Muhammad ibn al-Zaidbud and Jawhar ibn Ahmad surnamed Ibn Sirah, who was later lost at sea with his ship. My last voyage from Kanbalu to Oman was in A.H. 304⁷ on the ship belonging to Ahmad and Abd al-Samad, who were the brothers of Abd al-Rahim ibn Ja'far al-Sirafi, a native of Mikan,

which is a quarter of Siraf. They were both lost at sea with all their goods later on. The Amir⁸ of Oman at the time of my last voyage was Ahmad ibn Hilal, son of a sister of al-Qital. I have sailed much on the seas, . . . but I do not know of one more dangerous than that of the Zanj, of which I have just spoken. . . .

The land of Zanj produces wild leopard skins. The people wear them as clothes, or export them to Muslim countries. They are the largest leopard skins and the most beautiful for making saddles. The sea of Zanj and that of Abyssinia⁹ lie on the right of the sea of India, and join up. They also export tortoise-shell for making combs, for which ivory is likewise used. . . . As we have said, the Zanj and other Abyssinian peoples are spread about on the right bank of the Nile,¹⁰ as far as the end of the Abyssinian sea. The Zanj

¹The region of southeast Arabia that stretches along the entrance to the Persian Gulf.

²The island of Pemba.

³The region of the Indian Ocean that washes the central portion of Africa's eastern coast.

⁴Worshippers of idols. People who follow traditional religions.

⁵Arabs normally used this term to refer only to the people of Malaysia, who speak a language that is related to the Malagasy tongue of Madagascar. Madagascar is a large island off the coast of East Africa and opposite Sofala; Malaysia is across the Indian Ocean in Southeast Asia (see note 19). In the present context, however, the term seems to refer to the people of interior Africa.

⁶A port on the Iranian shore of the Persian Gulf.

⁷A.H. is an abbreviation for a Latin term that translates as *in the year of the Hijra*. Muhammad's *hijra* from Mecca to Medina, which began on July 16, 622, is the starting point of the Islamic calendar. Because the Islamic year is lunar, one cannot simply subtract 622 years from a date in the common calendar to arrive at its equivalent in the Islamic calendar. A.H. 304 equates to 915/916 C.E.

⁸An Arabic term that means "commander." Here it means "prince" or "governor."

⁹Usually the term refers only to the land of Ethiopia, but al-Mas'udi seems to use it here to refer to a substantial portion of the northeastern coast of Africa (see note 11).

¹⁰Not the Nile. Maybe he means the Sabi River, which flows out of the Zimbabwe Plateau and reaches the ocean in the modern state of Mozambique.

are the only Abyssinian people¹¹ to have crossed the branch which flows out of the upper stream of the Nile into the sea of Zanj. They settled in that area, which stretches as far as Sofala, which is the farthest limit of land and the end of the voyages made from Oman and Siraf on the sea of Zanj. In the same way that the sea of China ends with the land of Japan, the sea of Zanj ends with the land of Sofala and the Waqwaq, which produces gold and many other wonderful things. It has a warm climate and is fertile. The Zanj capital is there¹² and they have a king called the *Mfalme*. This is the ancient name of their kings, and all the other Zanj kings are subject to him: he has 300,000 horsemen. The Zanj use the ox as a beast of burden, for they have no horses, mules or camels in their land, and do not know of their existence. Like all Abyssinians they do not know of snow or hail. Some of their tribes sharpen their teeth and are cannibals. The land of Zanj begins with the branch which leaves the upper Nile¹³ and continues to the land of Sofala and Waqwaq. The villages stretch for 700 parasangs¹⁴ and the same distance inland: the country is cut up into valleys, mountains and stony deserts. There are many wild elephants but no tame ones. The Zanj do not use them for war or anything else, but only hunt and kill them. When they want to catch them, they throw down the leaves, bark and branches of a certain tree which grows in their country: then they wait in ambush until the elephants come to drink. The water burns them and makes them drunk. They fall down and cannot get up: their limbs will not articulate. The Zanj rush upon them armed with very

long spears, and kill them for their ivory. It is from this country that come tusks weighing fifty pounds and more. They usually go to Oman, and from there are sent to China and India. This is the chief trade route, and if it were not so, ivory would be common in Muslim lands.

In China the kings and military civil officers use ivory palanquins:¹⁵ no officer or notable dares to come into the royal presence in an iron palanquin, and ivory alone can be used. Thus they seek after straight tusks in preference to the curved, to make the things we have spoken of. They also burn ivory before their idols and cense their altars with it, just as Christians use the Mary incense¹⁶ and other perfumes. The Chinese make no other use of the elephant, and consider it unlucky to use it for domestic purposes or war. This fear has its origin in a tradition about one of their most ancient military expeditions. In India ivory is much sought after.¹⁷ It is used for the handles of daggers called *harari* or *harri* in the singular; and also for the curved sword-scabbards called *kartal*, in the plural *karatil*, but the chief use of ivory is making chessmen and backgammon pieces. . . .

In the land of Zanj the elephant lives about 400 years, according to what the people say, and they speak with certainty of having met an elephant so tall that it was impossible to kill it. . . . It is only in the land of Zanj and in India that elephants reproduce. . . .

Now let us return to our subject of the beginning of the chapter, the Zanj, the description of their country and of the other peoples of Abyssinia. The Zanj, although always busied

¹¹ Apparently all dark-skinned Africans are Abyssinians (see note 9).

¹² Probably the site, far up the Sabi River Valley, where the Shona state would construct the massive enclosures of Great Zimbabwe between 1200 and 1450.

¹³ Al-Mas'udi is wrong again (see note 10). Several major rivers run into the Indian Ocean, but not one of them is the Nile. This river, which delineates the northern boundary of the Land of Zanj, might be the Juba River.

¹⁴ A *parasang*, an ancient Persian unit of measurement, is three and one-half miles.

¹⁵ A covered litter carried on the shoulders of two or four persons.

¹⁶ Incense (also known as *frankincense*) was a fragrant resin from Yemen in the southern Arabian Peninsula that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians, and many others burned in their places of worship. Here the author seems to refer to a particular grade of incense that was burned in Christian churches in honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

¹⁷ Despite the presence of elephants in India, Indian artisans preferred African ivory because of its texture and size.

hunting the elephant and collecting its ivory, make no use of it for domestic purposes. They use iron instead of gold and silver, just as they use oxen, as we said before, both for beasts of burden and for war. These oxen are harnessed like a horse and run as fast. . . .

To go back to the Zanj and their kings, these are known as *Wafalme*,¹⁸ which means son of the Great Lord, since he is chosen to govern them justly. If he is tyrannical or strays from the truth, they kill him and exclude his seed from the throne; for they consider that in acting wrongfully he forfeits his position as the son of the Lord, the King of Heaven and Earth. They call God *Maliknajlu*, which means Great Lord.

The Zanj have an elegant language and men who preach in it. One of their holy men will often gather a crowd and exhort his hearers to please God in their lives and to be obedient to him. He explains the punishments that follow upon dis-

obedience, and reminds them of their ancestors and kings of old. These people have no religious law: their kings rule by custom and by political expediency.

The Zanj eat bananas,¹⁹ which are as common among them as they are in India; but their staple food is millet²⁰ and a plant called *kalari* which is pulled out of the earth like truffles. It is plentiful in Aden²¹ and the neighboring part of Yemen²² near to the town. It is like the cucumber of Egypt and Syria. They also eat honey and meat. Every man worships what he pleases, be it a plant, an animal or a mineral. They have many islands where the coconut grows: its nuts are used as fruit by all the Zanj peoples. One of these islands, which is one or two days' sail from the coast, has a Muslim population and a royal family. This is the island of Kanbalu of which we have already spoken.

¹⁸ Apparently these are the kings mentioned above who are subordinate to the *Mfalme*.

¹⁹ Migrants from Malaysia in Southeast Asia settled in Madagascar around the first century C.E. (see note 5) and brought with them plants and seeds from their homeland, including the banana. From Madagascar the banana traveled into

the tropical rain forests of continental Africa, where it flourished as a domesticated crop.

²⁰ A cereal.

²¹ An Arabian port city that commands the entrance to the Red Sea.

²² Southwest Arabia

The Land of Ghana: Eleventh-Century Western Sudan



94 ▼ *Abu Ubaydallah al-Bakri*, *THE BOOK OF ROUTES AND REALMS*

Located south of the Sahara Desert is a broad expanse of grasslands, or *savanna*, that stretches across the breadth of the African continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. To the Arabs this region was known as *Bilad al-Sudan* (the country of the blacks). Arab and Berber merchants were especially interested in West Africa's Sudan because its inhabitants were advantageously located between the markets of North Africa and cultures farther south toward the tropical rain forests of the coast. From the southern peoples of the Niger and Senegal river valleys the inhabitants of the savanna obtained gold and slaves, which they traded for manufactured goods, horses, and salt with Berber and Arab merchants, who arrived in camel caravans from the north. Over time, this trans-Saharan commerce

stimulated development of a series of large trading states in the region that connected West Africa's gold fields with the cities of Mediterranean North Africa.

One of the earliest important trading empires to emerge was *Ghana* (not to be confused with its modern namesake, the nation of Ghana), which was located essentially in territory encompassed today by the nations of Mauritania and Mali. The origins of Ghana as an organized entity are lost in the shadows of the past but go back at least as far as the fifth century C.E., when the introduction of the *dromedary*, or single-humped Arabian camel, made it easier for outsiders to penetrate across the Sahara into the land of the *Soninke* people. Coming as traders and as raiders, the nomadic *Berber* people of the western Sahara apparently helped stimulate the formation of a Soninke kingdom organized for commerce and defense. Eventually that kingdom became known as *Ghana* — a term that originated as a royal title. During the course of the eighth and ninth centuries Arab merchants inhabiting the coastal cities of North Africa began to enter the lucrative trans-Saharan trading system, thereby gaining direct access to the region they called *the land of gold* — a land now dominated by the well-established state of Ghana.

In 1067/1068 Abu Ubaydallah al-Bakri (d. 1094), a resident of the city of Cordova in what is today Spain but was then the Muslim land of *al-Andalus*, composed a detailed description of this fabled region. Although he never traveled to nearby Africa and probably never even left his native land, al-Bakri provides us with one of the most important sources for the early history of the western Sudan. As was the accepted practice among Islamic geographers of his era, al-Bakri drew heavily from the writings of predecessors, many of whose works are now otherwise lost, and he also interviewed merchants who had traveled to the area. These interviews made it possible for al-Bakri to present up-to-date information on Ghana at a crucial moment in its history.

During the latter portion of the eleventh century the rulers and leading families of Ghana were increasingly adopting the faith and attendant culture of Islam. However, Muslims from the north brought not only the peaceful message of universal submission to the Word of God, they also brought war. A fundamentalist Islamic group of Berbers known as the *Almoravids* waged holy war, or jihad, against the Soninke of Ghana. It is unclear whether or not the Almoravids prevailed in this war, but apparently the conflict disrupted trade and weakened Ghana's economic base. In addition, the heartland of Ghana was becoming far less able to support its population due to an environmental crisis brought about by overfarming and excessive grazing. Large numbers of farmers and townspeople were forced to move away. With these combined losses, the recently converted monarchs of Ghana lost their ability to hold together their loosely organized and still predominantly non-Islamic empire. By the early thirteenth century Ghana had disintegrated. Hegemony over the markets of the western Sudan briefly passed to the kingdom of *Sosso* and then to the state of *Mali*, which reached its greatest territorial extent under Mansa Musa (r. 1312–1327), whom we saw in Chapter 8 Vol. A (source 62). We shall see Mali again in Chapter 2.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. To whom did a monarch pass his royal power? What does this tradition of royal succession suggest about Ghanaian society?
2. Describe the city of Ghana. What does its physical environment, especially its two centers, suggest about eleventh-century Ghanaian culture?
3. How do we know that the empire of Ghana was not the only state in the western Sudan?
4. How would you characterize the authority and sources of power of the rulers of Ghana?
5. What role did Islam play in Ghanaian society? What does your answer suggest about the way in which Islam entered the western Sudan?
6. What does the story of the conversion of the king of Malal suggest about the process of Islamization in the western Sudan?

Ghana is a title given to their kings; the name of the region is Awkar, and their king today, namely in the year 460,¹ is Tunka Manin. He ascended the throne in 455.² The name of his predecessor was Basi, and he became their ruler at the age of 85. He led a praiseworthy life on account of his love of justice and friendship for the Muslims. At the end of his life he became blind, but he concealed this from his subjects and pretended that he could see. When something was put before him he said: "This is good" or "This is bad." His ministers deceived the people by indicating to the king in cryptic words what he should say, so that the commoners could not understand. Basi was a maternal uncle of Tunka Manin. This is their custom and their habit, that the kingship is inherited only by the son of the king's sister. He has no doubt that his successor is a son of his sister, while he is not certain that his son is in fact his own, and he is not convinced of the genuineness of his relationship to him. This Tunka Manin is powerful, rules an enormous kingdom, and possesses great authority.

The city of Ghana consists of two towns situated on a plain.³ One of these towns, which is inhabited by Muslims, is large and possesses twelve mosques, in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. There are salaried imams and muezzins,⁴ as well as jurists and scholars. In the environs are wells with sweet water, from which they drink and with which they grow vegetables. The king's town is six miles distant from this one and bears the name of Al-Ghaba.⁵ Between these two towns there are continuous habitations. The houses of the inhabitants are of stone and acacia wood. The king has a palace and a number of domed dwellings all surrounded with an enclosure like a city wall. In the king's town, and not far from his court of justice, is a mosque where the Muslims who arrive at his court pray. Around the king's town are domed buildings and groves and thickets where the sorcerers of these people, men in charge of the religious cult, live. In them too are their idols and the tombs of their kings. These woods are guarded and none may enter them and know

¹1067/1068 C.E. (see source 93, note 7).

²1063 C.E.

³The city consisted of two separate walled towns connected by a long, unwallled strip of private dwellings. Known as *Koumbi-Saleh*, its ruins are located in the southern region of the modern nation of Mauritania. At its eleventh-century height, this double city probably held some twenty thousand people.

⁴*Imams* are religious teachers and prayer leaders; *muezzins* are the chanters who ascend the minarets, or towers, of the mosques and call the faithful to prayer five times daily.

⁵The term means *the forest*, and refers to the sacred grove mentioned below. (For more on sacred groves, see source 96.)

what is there. In them also are the king's prisons. If somebody is imprisoned there no news of him is ever heard. The king's interpreters, the official in charge of his treasury and the majority of his ministers are Muslims. Among the people who follow the king's religion⁶ only he and his heir apparent (who is the son of his sister) may wear sewn clothes. All other people wear robes of cotton, silk, or brocade, according to their means. All of them shave their beards, and women shave their heads. The king adorns himself like a woman, wearing necklaces round his neck and bracelets on his forearms, and he puts on a high cap decorated with gold and wrapped in a turban of fine cotton. He sits in audience or to hear grievances against officials in a domed pavilion around which stand ten horses covered with gold-embroidered materials. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold, and on his right are the sons of the vassal kings⁷ of his country wearing splendid garments and their hair plaited with gold. The governor of the city sits on the ground before the king and around him are ministers seated likewise. . . . When people who profess the same religion as the king approach him they fall on their knees and sprinkle dust on their heads, for this is their way of greeting him. As for the Muslims, they greet him only by clapping their hands.

Their religion is paganism and the worship of idols. When their king dies they construct over the place where his tomb will be an enormous dome of wood. Then they bring him on a bed covered with a few carpets and cushions and place him beside the dome. At his side they place his ornaments, his weapons, and the vessels from which he used to eat and drink, filled with various kinds of food and beverages. They place there

too the men who used to serve his meals. They close the door of the dome and cover it with mats and furnishings. Then the people assemble, who heap earth upon it until it becomes like a big hillock and dig a ditch around it until the mound can be reached at only one place.

They make sacrifices to their dead and make offerings of intoxicating drinks.

On every donkey-load of salt when it is brought into the country their king levies one golden dinar,⁸ and two dinars when it is sent out. From a load of copper the king's due is five mithqals,⁹ and from a load of other goods ten mithqals. The best gold found in his land comes from the town of Ghiyaru, which is eighteen days' traveling distant from the king's town over a country inhabited by tribes of the Sudan whose dwellings are continuous.

The nuggets found in all the mines of his country are reserved for the king, only this gold dust being left for the people. But for this the people would accumulate gold until it lost its value. The nuggets may weigh from an ounce to a pound. It is related that the king owns a nugget as large as a big stone. . . .

The king of Ghana, when he calls up his army, can put 200,000 men¹⁰ into the field, more than 40,000 of them archers. . . .

On the opposite bank of the Nil¹¹ is another great kingdom, stretching a distance of more than eight days' marching, the king of which has the title of *Daw*. The inhabitants of this region use arrows when fighting. Beyond this country lies another called Malal,¹² the king of which is known as *al-musulmani*.¹³ He is thus called because his country became afflicted with drought one year following another; the inhabitants prayed for rain, sacrificing cattle till they had exterminated almost all of them, but the

⁶The king, who was not a Muslim, followed the ancient religious ways of the Soninke people.

⁷Subordinate kings, or lords.

⁸A standard gold coin in the Islamic World that weighed 4.72 grams, or one *mithqal* (see note 9).

⁹A standard of weight equaling 4.72 grams.

¹⁰An apparent exaggeration. There was no regular stand-

ing Ghanaian army; the various districts of the empire sent warriors as the occasion warranted.

¹¹Islamic geographers of this era mistakenly believed that the Niger River was the western source of the Nile.

¹²A *Mandike* kingdom that probably was the nucleus of the later empire of Mali.

¹³"The Muslim."

drought and the misery only increased. The king had as his guest a Muslim who used to read the Qur'an and was acquainted with the Sunna.¹⁴ To this man the king complained of the calamities that assailed him and his people. The man said: "O King, if you believed in God (who is exalted) and testified that He is One, and testified as to the prophetic mission of Muhammad (God bless him and give him peace) and if you accepted all the religious laws of Islam, I would pray for your deliverance from your plight and that God's mercy would envelop all the people of your country and that your enemies and adversaries might envy you on that account." Thus he continued to press the king until the latter accepted Islam and became a sincere Muslim. The man made him recite from the Qur'an some easy passages and taught him religious obligations and practices which no one may be excused from know-

ing. Then the Muslim¹⁵ made him wait till the eve of the following Friday,¹⁵ when he ordered him to purify himself by a complete ablution, and clothed him in a cotton garment which he had. The two of them came out towards a mound of earth, and there the Muslim stood praying while the king, standing at his right side, imitated him. Thus they prayed for a part of the night, the Muslim reciting invocations and the king saying "Amen." The dawn had just started to break when God caused abundant rain to descend upon them. So the king ordered the idols to be broken and expelled the sorcerers from his country. He and his descendants after him as well as his nobles were sincerely attached to Islam, while the common people of his kingdom remained polytheists. Since then their rulers have been given the title of *al-musulmani*.

¹⁴The traditions of Islam.

¹⁵The beginning of the Islamic day of rest and community worship.

The Land of Seyon: Fourteenth-Century Ethiopia



95 ▼ THE GLORIOUS VICTORIES OF 'AMDA SEYON

Ethiopia, a kingdom to the southeast of ancient Kush (or Nubia) in Africa's north-east highlands, looks out across the Red Sea to Yemen, the southwestern portion of the Arabian Peninsula. Settlers from Yemen crossed these waters, perhaps as early as the seventh century B.C.E., and mixed with the indigenous inhabitants to produce a hybrid civilization whose language, *Ge'ez*, was essentially Semitic but contained significant Kushitic elements. Because of its strategic location astride a trade route that linked Egypt and the Mediterranean World with the markets of East Africa, Arabia, and India, Ethiopia flourished. A Greek shipping manual of the first century C.E. notes that Adulis, Ethiopia's port on the Red Sea, was north-east Africa's premier center for the ivory trade.

According to Ethiopian chronicles, in 333 King Ezana (r. 320–350) converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of his realm. In the years that followed the Ethiopian people gradually adopted the new faith. Like the Egyptians and Nubians to their north, the Ethiopians later adopted a type of Christian-

ity known as *Monophysitism* (from the Greek words for “one nature”). This form of Christian belief, which arose in the fifth century, centered on a doctrine that deemphasized Jesus’ humanity to the point of maintaining that he had a single, divine nature. When the Churches of Constantinople and Rome condemned Monophysite teachings as heresy in 451, the Ethiopian Church was doctrinally cut off from these two centers of Christianity. The Arab-Muslim conquest of Egypt in the 640s further cut Ethiopia off from its Christian coreligionists in Byzantium and the West. In time, most of previously Christian Egypt converted to Islam, although its native Christians, known as *Coptic Christians*, remained a significant minority, as they are today. Egypt, the land that had introduced Christianity to Nubia and Ethiopia, was now an Islamic stronghold. On their part, Nubians and Ethiopians vigorously fought to retain their political autonomy and Christian identity in the face of Islamic pressure from Egypt. After the mid thirteenth century, however, Nubian resistance to Islam weakened. By the mid fourteenth century Nubia no longer had an independent Christian monarchy, and the Christian faith was fast losing out to Islam. By the sixteenth century, Nubia’s Christian population was a minority and would remain so down to the present. (Nubia today is the nation of Sudan.)

Farther to the south, Ethiopia, fairly secure in its mountain strongholds, continued to hold out against Islam. The following document, composed by an eyewitness to the events, tells the story of how King ‘Amda Seyon I (r. 1314–1344), whose throne name was *Gabra Masqal* (servant of the cross), resisted an invasion in 1329 by Sabr ad-Din, the ruler of Ifat, a nearby Islamic principality. More than simply a monarch on the defensive, ‘Amda Seyon was a militant expansionist, who in his thirty-year reign undertook a series of offensive operations against neighboring Islamic states and achieved significant success at their expense. Between 1320 and 1340 he managed to bring Ifat and other Islamic states of the highland plateau under the control of his expanding kingdom. As the chronicle points out, Sabr ad-Din was actually a tributary prince who revolted against ‘Amda Seyon’s authority.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What picture emerges of Muslim-Christian relations in fourteenth-century Ethiopia?
2. The Christian Ethiopian attitude toward Jews and Judaism has been characterized as ambivalent. Do you find in this source any evidence to support such a judgment? Please be specific in your answer.
3. Reread Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Ecclesiastical History* (Chapter 7 Vol. A, source 50). Do you see any parallels between the tone and message of that source and this document? What are they? What conclusions do you draw?

Let us write, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the power and the victory which God wrought by the hands of 'Amda Seyon king of Ethiopia, whose throne-name is Gabra Masqal. . . . Now the king of Ethiopia . . . heard that the king of the Rebels¹ had revolted, and in his arrogance was unfaithful to him, making himself great, like the Devil who set himself above his creator and exalted himself like the Most High. The king of the Rebels, whose name was Sabradin, was full of arrogance towards his lord 'Amda Seyon, and said, "I will be king over all the land of Ethiopia; I will rule the Christians according to my law, and I will destroy their churches." And having said this, he arose and set out and came to the land of the Christians, and killed some of them; and those who survived, both men and women, he took prisoner and converted them to his religion.

And after this he said, "I will nominate governors over the provinces of Ethiopia." . . . And he appointed governors over all the provinces of Ethiopia, even those which he had not been able to reach.

But the feet cannot become the head, nor the earth the sky, nor the servant the master. That perverse one, the son of a viper, of the seed of a serpent, the son of a stranger from the race of Satan, thought covetously of the throne of David² and said, "I will rule in Seyon,"³ for pride entered into his heart, as into the Devil his father. He said, "I will make the Christian churches into mosques for the Muslims, and I will convert to my religion the king of the Christians together with his people, and I will nominate him governor of one province, and if he refuses to be converted to my religion I will deliver him to the

herdsmen . . . that they make him a herder of camels. As for the queen Zan Mangesa, the wife of the king, I will make her work at the mill." . . .

Saying this, he collected all the troops of the Muslims, and chose from among them the ablest and most intelligent. These in truth were not able and intelligent, but fools, men full of error, impostors who foretell the future by means of sand and take omens from the sun and moon and stars of heaven, who say, "We observe the stars," but they have knowledge only of evil, they have no knowledge of God, their knowledge is of men which fades and perishes, for as Saint Paul says, "God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world."⁴

Let us return to the original subject. This evil man then questioned the diviners, saying, "Now tell me, I pray you, shall we conquer when we fight with the king of the Christians?" And one of them rose, a prophet of darkness. . . .

When Sabradin the king of the Rebels examined him, this diviner answered him persuasively, saying, "Behold, the kingdom of the Christians is finished; it shall be given to us, and you shall reign in Seyon. Rise, make war on the king of the Christians, and conquering you shall rule him and his people." And all the diviners said likewise. So the Rebel king sent into all the lands of the Muslims and called together his troops, and formed them into three divisions: one division set out for the land of Amhara, another set out for the land of Angot, and he himself prepared for war and set out to invade Shoa where the king was, — the slave of slaves against the prince of princes, the tail of the dog against the head of the lion, trusting in the false prediction that the Christian kingdom was come to an end.

¹The word *'elwan*, translated here as "Rebels," can also be translated as "infidels," or nonbelievers.

²The Ethiopian royal family, known as the *Solomonid Dynasty* (1270–1974), claimed descent from the union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon of Israel (r. ca. 962–922 B.C.E.), son of King David. See the Bible, 1 Kings, 10:1–13, and 2 Chronicles, 9:1–12, for an account of the queen's visit to King Solomon. According to Ethiopian tradition, *Menelik*, son of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon

and first king of Ethiopia, brought the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia, where it is still revered as the country's most sacred relic.

³The Ge'ez transliteration of *Zion*, one of Jerusalem's hills and a common symbolic term for Jerusalem and even the entire Holy Land. Here *Seyon* refers to Ethiopia because the Ethiopians claim partial Hebraic descent (note 2). 'Amda Seyon means *pillar of Zion*.

⁴The Bible, 1 Corinthians, 1:20.

As for us, we have heard and we know from the Holy Scriptures that the kingdom of the Muslims, established for but seven hundred years, shall cease to be at the proper time. But the kingdom of the Christians shall continue till the second coming of the Son of God, according to the words of Holy Scripture; and above all we know that the kingdom of Ethiopia shall endure till the coming of Christ, of which David prophesied saying "Ethiopia shall stretch her hands unto God."⁵

The messengers whom the king had sent to that Rebel returned to him the whole answer of the renegade, that rebel against righteousness. Hearing the insults of the evil man, the king called together his commanders. . . . He sent them forth to war against the evil Sabradin on the 24th day of Yakatit,⁶ saying to them, "May God give you strength and victory, and may He help you." . . . And they fought with him and forced him out of his residence; and he fled before them. And they defeated him through the power of God. . . . And they pursued him till sunset; but he escaped them, going by a different road. God threw him down from his glory. . . .

Then the army of the king set forth and attacked the camp of the Rebel. They looted the rebel king's treasure houses and took gold and silver and fine clothes and jewels without number. They killed men and women, old men and children; the corpses of the slain filled a large space. And those who survived were made prisoners, and there were left none but those who had escaped with that evil man. But the soldiers could not find a place to camp because of the foul smell of the corpses; and they went to another place and made their camp there. . . .

The king, hearing that the Rebel had escaped, went into the tabernacle⁷ and approached the altar; seizing the horns of the altar⁸ he implored mercy of Jesus Christ saying, "Hear the petition of my heart and reject not the prayer of my lips, and shut not the gates of Thy mercy because of my sins, but send me Thy good angel to guide me on my road to pursue mine enemy who has set himself above Thy sheep and above Thy holy name." And having said this, he gave an offering to the church of colored hangings for the altar, and went out. Then he sent other troops, . . . cavalry and foot-soldiers, strong and skilled in war, powerful without comparison in warfare and battle; he sent their commander . . . to make war in the land of the renegades who are like Jews, the crucifiers,⁹ . . . Because like the Jews, the crucifiers, they denied Christ, he sent troops to destroy and devastate them and subject them to the rule of Christ. . . .

The Rebel was filled with fear, and not knowing where to turn, for fear had taken possession of him, he sent to the queen¹⁰ saying, "I have done wrong to my lord the king, I have wrought injustice against him, and it is better that I fall into his hands than into the hands of a stranger. I will come myself and surrender to him, that he may do what he will to me." Thereupon the queen went to tell the king the whole of the message from that Rebel Sabradin, whose acts, like his name 'broken judgment,'¹¹ consist of insults, mad rage, errors, contentions, and arrogance. When the king heard this message which the Rebel had sent to the queen, he was exceedingly angry, and said to the queen, "Do you send him a message and say: 'If you come, or if you do not come, it will not trouble me; but if you go to a distant country I will pursue you through

⁵The Bible, Psalms, 68:31.

⁶February 18, 1329.

⁷A tent used as a chapel in the king's camp.

⁸As was the fashion in ancient Israel, Ethiopian altars had horns on all four corners. Suppliants would grasp one while praying.

⁹The *Falashas*, or Ethiopian Jews, are Kushitic people whose ancestors had intermarried with Jewish immigrants from

Yemen. They are termed *crucifiers* here because of the notion that the Jews were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion.

¹⁰Queen Mangesa, wife of King 'Amda Seyon.

¹¹A pun. In Ge'ez *sabara* means "break" and *dayn* means "judgment." Actually, the Arabic name Sabr ad-Din means "constant in the faith."

the power of God. And if you go into a cave, or if you just run away, I will not leave you alone nor will I return to my capital till I have taken you.'"

Now when he received this message, Sabradin set out and came to the king, and stood before him. And the king asked him, saying, "Why have you behaved thus to me? The gifts which you formerly sent to me you have given to your servants; and the multitude of goods of silver and gold which I gave to the poor you have taken away. Those who traded with me you have bound in chains; and what is worse, you have aspired to the throne of my kingdom, in imitation of the Devil your father who wished to be the equal of his creator." When that Rebel heard these words of the king he was at a loss for an answer in the greatness of his fear, for he was afraid of the king's presence; and he answered, "Do with me according to your will." And immediately the soldiers who were on the left and right of the king stood forth in anger and said, "This man is not worthy of life, for he has burnt the churches of God, he has slain Christians, and those whom he did not

kill he has compelled to accept his religion. Moreover he desired to ascend the high mountain of the kingdom." And some said, "Let us slay him with the edge of the sword"; others said, "Let us stone him to death"; and others again, "Let us burn him with fire that he may disappear from the earth." And they said to the king, "Think not, O king, that he comes to you honestly and freely, for he trusts in his magic art." And so saying, they lifted from his bosom and arm a talisman and revealed the form of his magic. Then said the king, "Can your talismans deliver you from my hands in which God has imprisoned you?" And he gave orders for his two hands to be bound with iron chains; he did not wish him to be killed, for he is merciful and forbearing. Thus was taken the Rebel in the net which he himself had woven, and in the snare which he himself had set. . . . After this the king sent news to the capital of his kingdom. . . . "There is good news for you: with the help of your prayers I have defeated my enemy who is also the enemy of Christ."

A Yoruba Woman of Authority?



96 ▼ SEATED FEMALE FIGURE

Like the Ethiopians, the *Yoruba*-speaking peoples of West Africa, who inhabit the forestlands that stretch from the edge of the savanna to the coast, trace their ancestry back to Southwest Asia, specifically Mecca. Such oral traditions are suspect as historical evidence and probably arose from a desire on the part of people converted to Islam well after 1200 to create for themselves an Arabic lineage. Whatever their origins, by the late fourteenth century the Yoruba people had established a number of independent kingdoms in a region encompassed today by the nations of Nigeria and Benin. One of the most important of these Yoruba kingdoms was *Oyo*. Although it reached its apogee as a regional power in the period 1600–1830, *Oyo*'s foundations as a city-state go back much earlier. Its first capital city, Old *Oyo*, located near the Niger River, was founded sometime between 800 and 1000.

The Yoruba of *Oyo* and elsewhere were great artists as well as state builders. The town of *Esie* in Nigeria is the site of a collection of over a thousand soapstone carvings of human figures that have lain for centuries in a grove (see source 94 for a description of Ghana's sacred groves). Each carving is an individual portrait,



A Yoruba Woman of Authority?

and it seems reasonable to infer that each represents a prominent, probably deceased, individual. The sculptures date to somewhere between 1100 and 1500 and seem to have come from either Old Oyo or the equally powerful Yoruba city-state of *Ife*.

The sculpture pictured here is twenty-six inches high and represents a seated woman holding a cutlass that rests against her right shoulder. Note her elaborate hairstyle, whose height equals that of her face, the three-stringed necklace, and the scarification of her face. This arrangement of scars is found equally on male and female effigies in the collection. The figure probably represents an *Iyalode* (mother in charge of external affairs), an important officer among the Yoruba. Although the specific functions of *Iyalodes* differed from kingdom to kingdom and from era to era, it is clear that they enjoyed wide-ranging political, social, economic, and even military powers. Simply stated, the *Iyalode* was a chief in her own right and one of the monarch's main lieutenants.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. List and comment on all of the clues that lead us to infer that this figurine represents a woman of authority. What do you think each symbol of authority represents?
 2. Compare this statue with the five statues in Chapter 5 Vol. A, source 41. What do all six statues have in common? What do those common characteristics suggest about the way in which authority is perceived and portrayed across cultures and time?
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The Americas

The approximate date of the arrival of the first humans in the Americas is disputed, but new evidence strongly suggests that migrants from East Asia reached the Western Hemisphere much earlier than previously believed. Until recently the standard model was that America's first human inhabitants were hunters who crossed the Bering land bridge during the last glacial era around twelve thousand years ago. That theory has been seriously challenged by archeologists who have discovered unmistakable signs of early human habitation at Monte Verde in Chile and at Cactus Hill in Virginia. Artifacts from the former site have been reliably dated to at least around twelve and one-half thousand years ago, and in April 2000 scientists announced that the remains of the Cactus Hill site are somewhere between fifteen and seventeen thousand years old. How long it took the ancestors of the first inhabitants of Monte Verde and Cactus Hill to travel from Alaska to these locations remains a mystery — if, indeed, they crossed over into Alaska at all. One theory, which is increasingly gaining a respectful hearing, favors the view that many of the earliest migrants to the New World traveled from northeastern Asia in small boats, stopping at various locations along

the western shores of the Americas, and they began doing so well over twenty thousand years ago.

Whenever it began, the original peopling of the Americas was an epochal event (or series of events because it was probably achieved in successive waves of migration from East Asia) rivaled only in magnitude by the demographic shifts that took place following the arrival in force of Europeans and Africans after 1492. With the advent of European and African peoples and their diseases, the whole population structure of the Americas underwent massive changes.

During the many years that separated these two eras, the Americas witnessed a variety of other only slightly less monumental developments. One of the most consequential was the indigenous development of agriculture based on the cultivation of over one hundred different crops unknown to the peoples of Africa and Eurasia. Chief among these were *maize* (*corn* in American English), potatoes, tomatoes, peanuts, manioc, and various types of beans, peppers, and squashes. By the time the Europeans arrived, agriculture was practiced from the woodlands of eastern North America to the rain forests of the Amazon tropics. As elsewhere, agriculture imposed restrictions on the behavior and social patterns of the cultivators and also produced enough food in a sufficiently regular manner to allow for the growth of dense populations. One result was the rise of civilizations, first in Mexico and farther south in Meso- and South America and later in regions that are today part of the United States.

Three of the major civilizations of North America were the *Mississippian Mound Culture*, the *Hohokam*, and the *Anasazi*. Between 1050 and 1200 C.E. the Mississippian Mound Builders created the city of Cahokia at a site that today is in East St. Louis, Illinois. At its height, Cahokia supported a population of at least eleven thousand people and possibly as many as thirty thousand. The Hohokam (those who have vanished) of the Sonoran Desert produced a complex urban society based upon their ability to construct and maintain some three hundred miles of irrigation canals in the region of what is today Phoenix, Arizona. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Anasazi (the ancient ones) of the Four Corners region of the American Southwest built cities in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, and at Mesa Verde in Colorado, which today stand as silent testimony of their engineering skills. All three civilizations participated in widespread trade networks and were influenced by the earlier civilizations of Mexico. All three also passed away as urban cultures long before the arrival of Europeans, who could only marvel at the ruins they left behind.

Because they left no written records behind and abandoned their urban centers so long ago, these North American civilizations remain largely mysterious, despite the considerable work of archeologists over the past half century. The *Maya*, *Aztec*, and *Inca* peoples of farther south, however, were still identifiable cultures when European conquerors and missionaries arrived on the scene. Despite the best attempts of many Europeans to efface totally the presumed devilish cultures that they had discovered, the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations would not be forgotten.

The sources that follow — the products of Amerindian and European crafters and authors — combine to shed light on four important American cultures that flourished between 500 and 1500.

The God Who Descended from the Mountains



97 ▼ *A MOCHE CERAMIC*

To most educated people pre-Columbian civilization in Peru is synonymous with the Inca culture of the Andean highlands. Actually, the Incas, whom the Spanish conquistadors met and conquered in the course of the sixteenth century C.E., were newcomers and only the most recent participants in what was already some two and one-half thousand years of Peruvian civilization. More than a thousand years before the rise of the Inca Empire, a people we call the *Moche*, or *Mochica*, constructed a highly developed civilization along the coastal desert plain of northern Peru. This region is one of the driest places on Earth, receiving an average of far less than an inch of annual rainfall. It is fed, however, by a number of rivers that rise in the towering Andes to the east and flow down to the Pacific Ocean. One of those rivers is the Rio Moche. The fertility of the Moche Valley allowed its inhabitants to carve out a powerful state and a distinctive civilization that was at the height of its creativity in the period 200–750.

Moche artisans perfected the craft of casting and alloying a variety of soft metals, allowing them to create some of the finest gold, silver, and copper artifacts ever produced in antiquity. The most distinctive and brilliant artistic products of this culture, however, were made from a humbler material — clay. The Moche people produced vast numbers of finely crafted ceramics — particularly effigy vessels that represented a wide variety of deities, humans, animals, plants, and structures — and large numbers of them have survived. More than 90 percent of all Moche art and craftwork uncovered by modern archeologists consists of these magnificent ceramics — all created without benefit of the potter's wheel.

No effigy pot, by itself, tells the historian much about Moche culture, but cumulatively they tell a compelling story of the daily lives, beliefs, and rituals of the people who created these earthenware masterpieces. Although a single example of Moche art might more easily confuse than illuminate, the artifact that appears here is an exception and provides some interesting insights into the Moche vision of the world.

This vessel — a water jug to be used possibly for only ceremonial purposes — is molded into a stylized mountain from which several deities emerge. In the center is a Moche god, who wears a sunrise headdress from which a snake's head projects, and he is flanked by two snakes. To his right (the viewer's left) is a were-jaguar, an individual possessing both jaguar and human characteristics (see Chapter 1 Vol. A, source 10). This individual, who seems to be a god (or a shaman who has taken on divine attributes), wears a living snake belt that curls beneath him so that he stands on the serpent's head.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Note the cave from which the god in the center of the water jug emerges. What is his apparent relationship with the mountain?



Moche Effigy Pot

2. Consider this same god's headdress. What is the message? (Keep in mind the geographic relationship of the mountains to the Moche Valley.)
3. Does the geographic situation of the Moche Valley provide any clue as to what the four snakes that flow from the mountain represent?
4. Based on your answers to questions 1–3, what do you conclude this god's main functions were?

5. What about the feline qualities of the god/shaman on the far left (as you view the pot)? What does he seem to represent? In answering this question, you might want to refer back to Chapter 1 Vol. A, source 10.
6. Consider the title of this source. Which of the two deities was the “god who descended from the mountains”? Why do you reach this conclusion?
7. Which of these two gods seems more remote and lofty? Why? Which seems more active and closer to humanity? Why? Which of these is the creator-god? What are the apparent functions of the other god? Which deity was probably more loved and prayed to? Why?

Taino Culture



98 ▼ *Ramón Pane, A REPORT CONCERNING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE INDIANS*

In the autumn of 1493 Christopher Columbus embarked on his second voyage to the West with a seventeen-ship flotilla and about twelve hundred sailors and colonists. One of the adventurers was a missionary priest named Ramón Pane, about whom we know very little, other than he was a native of the region of Catalonia and a member of the Hermits of Saint Jerome, a Spanish religious congregation noted for its strict asceticism. On arriving in the Caribbean, Pane went to live among the Tainos of Española (Hispaniola) in order to convert them to Catholic Christianity. In the course of his labors, Pane mastered the Taino language and listened to their sacred hymns and epic tales. On orders from Columbus, Pane prepared a detailed report of Taino religious beliefs and practices and presented it to the admiral, probably in 1498 when Columbus returned to the Americas for the third time.

Pane's report, the first systematic study of any Native-American culture by a European observer, is rich in detail and provides much information that would otherwise be lost to us. Unfortunately, the work went almost unnoticed by Pane's contemporaries, perhaps because most who read it had difficulty comprehending the sacred cosmology of the Tainos. Bartolomé de Las Casas, one of the most important sixteenth-century Spanish defenders of Amerindian rights, dismissed Pane as a simple-minded man whose description of Taino religious life was confused and of little worth. Happily, one person who did take the report seriously was Fernando Colón, Christopher Columbus's son, who included the whole text of Pane's study in his biography of his father, *History of the Admiral Christopher Columbus by His Son*. That history, however, was itself not taken seriously and remained unpublished at Fernando's death in 1539. In 1571 it was finally translated from Spanish into Italian and printed in Venice. While the translator seems to have done a reasonably good job on the biography, he had difficulty with the included report by Pane, as certain gaps in the translation indicate. To compound the problem, the original manuscript of Colón's work, along with Pane's original report, were lost about the same time that the translation was prepared. So far as

Pane's report was concerned, this meant that all that remained were the flawed Italian translation and several earlier brief summaries of the report, one of which was by the unsympathetic and somewhat confused Las Casas.

Despite these problems, Pane's report is a valuable text for modern historians and anthropologists. Research has revealed that far from being a simple-minded individual who wrote down a jumble of ill-understood stories, Pane was a careful student of Taino culture who probably managed not only to get the stories right but also maintained something of the original tone of the sacred stories and songs that he heard. As such, he gives us a fascinating glimpse into the Taino World as it existed for centuries prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How did the Tainos remember and pass on their traditions?
2. What did they believe regarding the dead?
3. Who or what were *bobutis*, and what do the stories about them suggest about Taino culture? Please be specific in your answer.
4. Who or what were *cemis*, and what do the stories about them suggest about Taino culture? Please be specific in your answer.
5. Compare Pane's description of Taino culture with that of Columbus's letter of 1493 in the Prologue. Does Pane's report substantiate any of Columbus's observations? How, if at all, does Pane correct any of Columbus's observations?

The Relation of Fray¹ Ramón Concerning the Antiquities of the Indians, Which He, Knowing Their Language, Carefully Compiled by Order of the Admiral

I, Fray Ramón, a poor anchorite² of the Order of St. Jerome, write by order of the illustrious Lord Admiral, viceroy, and governor of the islands and mainland of the Indies what I have been able to learn concerning the beliefs and idolatry of the Indians, and the manner in which they worship their gods. Of these matters I shall give an account in the present treatise.

Each one adores the idols or *cemis*³ that he has in his house in some special way and with some special rites. They believe that there is an im-

mortal being in the sky whom none can see and who has a mother but no beginning. They call him Yocahu Vagua Maorocoti, and his mother Atabex, Yermaoguacar, Apito, and Zuimaco, which are five different names.⁴ I write only of the Indians of the island of Española, for I know nothing about the other islands and have never seen them. These Indians also know whence they came and where the sun and moon had their beginning, and how the sea was made, and of the place to which the dead go. They believe that the dead people appear on the roads to one who walks alone, but when many go together, the dead do not appear. All this they were taught by their forebears, for they cannot read or count above ten. . . .

¹*Fray* is Spanish for *Friar*, or "Brother" — a title accorded members of certain religious orders.

²A synonym for *hermit*.

³See the Prologue, note 15.

⁴The text is corrupted here, and the Italian translator provides only four names of the mother goddess. A summary of the Spanish text of Pane's report by the churchman Peter Martyr supplies the missing name: *liella*.

XII. *Their beliefs concerning the wanderings of the dead, of their appearance, and what they do.* They believe the dead go to a place called Coaybay, on one side of an island called Soraya. They say that the first to live there was one Maquetaurie Guayava, who was lord of Coaybay, home and dwelling place of the dead.

XIII. *Of the forms which they assign to the dead.* They say that during the day the dead live in seclusion, but at night walk about for recreation and eat of fruit called *guabaza*, which has the flavor of [the quince]⁵ and during the day is⁶ . . . but at night is changed into fruit; and they have festivities and keep company with the living. The Indians have this method of identifying dead people: They touch the belly of a person with the hand, and if they do not find a navel, they say that person is *operito*, which means dead; for they say that dead persons have no navels. Sometimes one who does not take this precaution and lies with a woman of Coaybay is mocked; for when he holds her in his arms, she suddenly disappears and his arms are empty. They still believe this. When a person is alive, they call his spirit *goeiz*; when he is dead, *opia*. They say that this *goeiz* appears to them often, now in the shape of a man, now of a woman. They say there was a man who wished to fight with a spirit; but when he closed with it, it disappeared, and the man flung his arms about a tree from whose branches he hung. All of them, young and old, believe this; they also believe that the spirits appear to them in the shape of their father, mother, brothers, relatives, or in some other shape. The fruit that they believe the dead eat is the size of a peach. The dead do not appear to them by day, but only by night, and therefore one who walks about at night feels great fear.

XIV. *Whence come these beliefs and why they persist in them.* There are certain men among them,

called *bobutís*, who practice great frauds upon the Indians, as shall be explained hereafter, to make them believe that they, the *bobutís*, speak with the dead and that they know all their deeds and secrets, and that when the Indians are ill they cure them. These deceptions I have seen with my own eyes, whereas the other things I told about I heard of only from others, especially from their principal men — because these men believe these fables more firmly than the others. Like the Moors,⁷ they have their religion set forth in ancient chants by which they are governed, as the Moors are by their Scripture.⁸ When they sing their chants, they play an instrument called *mayohavau* that is made of wood and is hollow, strong, yet very thin, an ell long and half as wide; the part which is played has the shape of a blacksmith's tongs, and the other end is like a club, so that it looks like a gourd with a long neck; this instrument is so sonorous that it can be heard a league and a half away.⁹ To its accompaniment they sing their chants, which they know by heart; and their principal men learn from infancy to play it and sing to it, according to their custom. Now I shall tell many other things concerning the ceremonies and customs of these heathen.

XV. *Of how the buhuitihus¹⁰ practice medicine, and what they teach the people, and of the deceptions they practice in their cures.* All the Indians of the island of Española have many different kinds of *cemis*. In some they keep the bones of their father, mother, relations, and forebears; these *cemis* are made of stone or wood. They have many of both kinds. There are some that speak, others that cause food plants to grow, others that bring rain, and others that make the winds blow. These simple, ignorant people, who know not our holy faith, believe that these idols or rather demons do all these things. When an Indian falls ill, they

⁵There is a gap in the Italian translation, but Peter Martyr's summary (note 4) provides the fruit — quince.

⁶Another gap in the Italian text.

⁷North African and Spanish Muslims.

⁸The Qur'an.

⁹About four and one-half miles.

¹⁰A variant of *bobutís* (Chapter XIV). The titles are used interchangeably throughout the Italian text. Peter Martyr's summary calls them *boitius*, and Las Casas variously records their title as *bohique* and *bebique*. Apparently, *bobuti(s)* is more correct and as close as we will ever get to the original Taino word for these shamans.

bring the *buhuitihu* to him. This doctor must observe a diet just like his patient and must assume the suffering expression of a sick man. He must also purge himself just as the sick man does, by snuffing a powder called *coboba*¹¹ up his nose. This produces such intoxication that they do not know what they are doing; and they say many senseless things, declaring that they are speaking with the *cemis* and that the latter are telling him the cause of the illness.

XVI. *What these buhuitihus do.* When a *buhuitihu* goes to call upon a patient, before leaving his hut he takes some soot from a cooking pot, or some charcoal, and blackens his face in order to make the sick man believe whatever he may say about his sickness; then he takes some small bones and a little meat, wraps the whole in something so it will not fall out, and puts it in his mouth. Meanwhile the patient has been purged in the manner described above. Entering the sick man's hut, the doctor sits down, and all fall silent; if there are any children in the hut, they are put out so they will not interfere with the *buhuitihu's* work; only one or two of the principal men remain. Then the *buhuitihu* takes some *güeyo* herb,¹² . . . wide, and another herb, wrapped in an onion leaf four inches long (but the *güeyo* herb is what they all generally use), and taking it between his hands, he mashes it into a pulp; and then he puts it into his mouth at night so as to vomit anything harmful that he may have eaten. Then he begins to sing his chant and, taking up a torch, drinks the juice of that herb. This done, he is quiet for a time; then he rises, goes toward the sick man, who lies alone in the middle of the hut, and walks about him twice or as many times as he thinks proper. Then he stands in front of him and takes him by the legs, feeling of his body from the thighs to the feet, after which he draws his hands away forcefully, as if pulling something out. Then he goes to the door, shuts it, and speaks to it, saying: "Begone to the mountain, or the sea, or where

you will"; then, after he has blown like one who blows chaff from his hand, he turns around, joins his hands together as if he were very cold, blows on his hands, and sucks in his breath as if sucking marrow from a bone, then sucks at the sick man's neck, or stomach, or shoulder, or cheeks, or the belly or some other part of the body. Having done this, he begins to cough and make a face as if he had eaten something bitter; then he spits into his hand the stone or bone or piece of meat that he put in his mouth at home or on the road. And if it is a piece of food, he tells the sick man, "You must know that you have eaten something that caused the sickness from which you suffer. See how I have taken it out of your body, where your *cemi* lodged it because you did not pray to him or build him a shrine or give him some land." If it is a stone, he says, "Take good care of it." Sometimes they believe these stones are good and help women in childbirth, and they take good care of them, wrapping them in cotton, placing them in small baskets, and putting food before them; they do the same with the *cemis* they have in their houses. On a holiday, when they have much food — fish, meat, or bread — they put some of each food in the house of the *cemi*, and next day they carry this food back to their huts after the *cemi* has eaten. But it would truly be a miracle if the *cemi* ate of that or anything else, for the *cemi* is a dead thing of stone or wood.

XVII. *How these physicians are sometimes paid back for their deceptions.* If the sick man should die in spite of having done all these things, and if he has many relations or one who is lord over a village and so can stand up to the *buhuitihu* or doctor (for men of small influence dare not contend with them), then those who wish to do the *buhuitihu* mischief do the following: First, in order to learn if the sick man died through the doctor's fault, or because he did not observe the diet that the doctor prescribed for him, these relations take an herb which is called *güeyo*, whose

¹¹A hallucinogenic snuff made from the crushed seeds of the *piptadenia* tree.

¹²Another gap in the Italian translation.

leaves resemble those of the sweet basil, being thick and long; this herb is also called *zacón*. They squeeze the juice from the leaf, then cut the dead man's nails and the hair above his forehead, pound the nails and hair to a powder between two stones, mix this powder with the juice of the herb, and pour the mixture between the dead man's lips to find out from him if the doctor was the cause of his death and whether he observed his diet. They ask this of him many times, until at last he speaks as distinctly as if he were alive and answers all their questions, saying that the *bubuitihu* did not observe the diet, or was the cause of his death. They say that the doctor asks him if he is alive, and that he can speak very clearly; he replies that he is dead. After they have learned from him what they want to know, they return him to the grave from which they took him. They perform this sorcery in still another way. They take the dead man and make a great fire like that used for making charcoal, and when the wood has turned to live coals, they throw the body into that fierce blaze; then they cover it with earth, as the charcoal-burner does the charcoal, and leave it there as long as they think advisable. Then they ask him the same question as above. The dead man replies that he knows nothing. This they ask of him ten times, and ten times he replies in the same way. Again they ask him if he is dead, but he will speak only those ten times.

XVIII. *How the dead man's relatives avenge themselves when they have had a reply through the sorcery of the potions.* The dead man's relations assemble on a certain day and lie in wait for the said *bubuitihu*, give him such a thrashing that they break his legs, arms, and head, and leave him for dead. At night, they say, there come many different kinds of snakes — white, black, green, and many other colors — that lick the face and whole body of the physician whom the Indians have left for dead. This they do two or three nights in succession; and presently, they say, the bones of his body knit together again and mend. And he rises and walks rather slowly to his home. Those who meet him on the road say, "Were you

not dead?" He replies that the *cemis* came to his aid in the shape of snakes. And the dead man's relations, very angry and desperate because they thought they had avenged the death of their kinsman, again try to lay hands on him; and if they catch him a second time, they pluck out his eyes and smash his testicles, for they say no amount of beating will kill one of these physicians if they do not first tear out his testicles.

How the dead man whom they have burned reveals what they wish to know, and how they take their vengeance. When they uncover the fire, the smoke rises until it is lost from sight, and when it leaves the furnace, it makes a chirping noise. Then it descends and enters the hut of the *bubuitihu* or doctor. If he did not observe the diet, he falls sick that very moment, is covered with sores, and his whole body peels. This they take for a sign that he did not observe his diet, and so they try to kill him in the manner described above. These are the sorceries they perform.

XIX. *How they make and keep their wooden or stone cemís.* They make the wooden *cemis* in this fashion. If a man walking along the way sees a tree moving its roots, he stops, filled with fear, and asks who it is. The tree replies, "Summon a *bubuitihu*, and he will tell you who I am." Then that man goes in search of a physician and tells him what he has seen. The sorcerer or warlock immediately runs toward that tree, sits down by it, and prepares a *coboba* for it. . . . And having made the *coboba*, he rises, and pronounces all its titles as if it were a great lord, and says to it: "Tell me who you are and what you are doing here, and what you want of me and why you summoned me. Tell me if you want me to cut you down, and if you wish to come with me, and how you want me to carry you; for I shall build a house for you and endow it with land." Then that *cemi* or tree, become an idol or devil, tells him the shape in which it wants to be made. And the sorcerer cuts it down and carves it into the shape that it has ordered, builds a house for it and endows it with land; and many times a year he makes *coboba* for it.

This *coboba* is their means of praying to the idol and also of asking it for riches. When they wish to know if they will gain a victory over their enemies, they enter a hut to which only the principal men are admitted. And the lord is the first to make the *coboba* and plays an instrument; and while he makes the *coboba* none may speak. After he has finished his prayer he remains for some time with bowed head and arms resting on his knees; then he lifts his head, looks up to the sky, and speaks. All respond to him in a loud voice, and having spoken, they all give thanks; and he relates the vision he had while stupefied with the *coboba* that he snuffed up his nose and that went to his head. He tells that he has spoken with the *cemi* and that they will gain the victory, or that their enemies will flee, or that there will be many deaths, or wars, or famines, or the like, or whatever comes to his addled head to say. One can imagine the state he is in, for they say the house appears to him to be turned upside-down and the people to be walking with their feet in the air. This *coboba* they make not only for the *cemis* of stone and wood but also for the bodies of the dead, as told above.

There are different kinds of stone *cemis*. Some the doctors extract from bodies of sick people, and it is believed these are the best to induce childbirth in pregnant women. There are other *cemis* that speak; these have the shape of a large turnip with leaves that trail over the ground and are as long as the leaves of the caper bush; these leaves generally resemble those of the elm, others have three points: The natives believe they help the yucca grow. The root resembles that of the radish, and the leaf generally has six or seven points. I know not with what to compare it, because I have seen no plant like it in Spain or in any other country. The stalk of the yucca is as high as a man.

Now I shall tell of their beliefs concerning their

idols and *cemis*, and how they are greatly deluded by them. . . .

▷ Pane now narrates stories about a variety of famous *cemis*. The following two stories are typical.

XXII. *Concerning another cemi named Opiyelguovirán, who belonged to a principal man named Cavavaniovavá, who had many vassals.*¹³ They say this *cemi* Opiyelguovirán had four legs, like a dog, and was made of wood, and frequently left his house by night and went into the woods. They would go in search of him, and bring him back to the house tied with cords, but he always returned to the woods. They say that when the Spaniards arrived on the island of Española, this *cemi* fled and went to a lagoon; they followed him there by his tracks, but never saw him again, and know nothing more of him. That is the story they tell, and faithfully do I tell it again.

XXIII. *Concerning another cemi named Guabancex.* This *cemi* lived in the land of a principal cacique,¹⁴ named Aumatex. It is a woman, and they say she has two other *cemis* for companions; one is a herald and the other is the collector and governor of the waters. They say that when Guabancex is angry, she raises the winds and water, throws down houses, and tears up the trees. They say this *cemi* is a woman and is made of stones of that country. Her herald, named Guatauba, carries out her orders by making the other *cemis* of the province help in raising wind and rain. Her other companion is named Coatrisquíé; of him they say that he collects the waters in the valleys between the mountains and then lets them loose to destroy the countryside. The people hold this to be gospel truth.

¹³Subordinates.

¹⁴The Taino word for *chief*, which has spread to both the Spanish and English languages.

Quiché Mayan Gods and Monarchs



99 ▼ *THE BOOK OF THE COMMUNITY*

Among all the peoples of ancient America, only the Meso-Americans created systems of writing, although the Quechua-speaking people of the Andes, who carved out the Inca Empire, devised a system of record keeping by means of knotted strings that served almost as well (source 100). Of all the forms of writing used in Central America, the *Maya* had the most sophisticated, an exceedingly complex system based on a wide range of picture-symbols, technically known as *glyphs*, that variously represented objects, concepts, and sounds. Unfortunately, Spanish missionaries, zealous to destroy all remnants of indigenous paganism, burned most of the books of the Maya. Only three preconquest Mayan books, and fragments of a fourth, survived the fires of the Spanish Catholic Inquisition. Nevertheless, three factors allow us to know more about the preconquest Maya than any other Amerindian civilization: (1) recently scholars broke the code of the Mayas' ancient written language, enabling historians to read most of their texts and engraved monuments; (2) the classical Maya left behind a rich archeological heritage, which is still being explored and interpreted; and (3) the Maya, as a people and culture, survive and even flourish today in Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, preserving much of their past in their living traditions.

The document that appears here dates from shortly after the early sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of the *Quiché* Maya of Guatemala, the most powerful of the then-existing Mayan states of Central America. The Maya, who had a shared culture but were never organized under a single central authority, had reached their classical heights between about 300 and 800, but by 900 had abandoned many of their cities and ceremonial centers. Yet even with the collapse of many of their states and urban centers, the Maya persisted as a culture and even built a few new cities. When the army of Pedro de Alvarado invaded the territory of the Quiché in 1524, it found a vigorous society that initially offered spirited resistance. Eventually, however, the Spaniards prevailed.

Faced with the threat of losing all memory of the Mayan way of life, an anonymous Quiché Indian, who was at least nominally a convert to Catholic Christianity, undertook to compile, in his native tongue, a collection of Mayan beliefs, traditions, and history down to 1550, because, as he noted: "The original book, written long ago, existed, but its sight is hidden to the searcher." The result was the *Popol Vuh*, or *Book of the Community*. The *Popol Vuh* remained hidden for about 150 years until it was discovered by a sympathetic Spanish priest, who was also a scholar of the Quiché culture. He transcribed the text from its manuscript, thereby preserving the original Quiché version, and translated it into Spanish, in order "to bring to light what had been among the Indians in the olden days [and] . . . to give information on the errors which they had in their paganism and which they still adhere to among themselves."

The following selection tells about *Tohil*, chief god of the Quiché Maya, and his relationship with the *Ahpop*, or Quiché monarch, in the era preceding the coming of the Spaniards.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What special functions did the ancient Quiché monarchs have? Why did the monarchs fast?
2. What were the mutual responsibilities of monarch and subjects? What do they suggest about this society?
3. How was the Quiché state ruled? What does its having three royal houses suggest?
4. What did the people owe Tohil? What was expected in return?
5. How do we know that Tohil was a syncretic deity, whose manifestations and functions were drawn from a variety of sources? What does this suggest about the make-up of the Quiché state?
6. What evidence is there that the Quiché saw themselves as belonging to a single culture, despite their tribal divisions?
7. What allows us to infer that postclassical Quiché civilization was still vibrant?

We shall now tell of the House of the God. The house was also given the same name as the god. The Great Edifice of Tohil was the name of the Temple of Tohil, of those of Cavec.¹ . . .

Tzutuhá, which is seen in Cahbahá,² is the name of a large edifice in which there was a stone which all the lords of Quiché worshiped and which was also worshiped by all the tribes.

The people first offered their sacrifices before Tohil, and afterward went to pay their respects to the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camhá.³ Then they went to present their gorgeous feathers and their tribute before the king. And the kings whom they maintained were the Ahpop and the Ahpop-Camhá, who had conquered their towns.

Great lords and wonderful men were the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuhá, the mar-

velous kings Quicab and Cavizimah.⁴ They knew if there would be war, and everything was clear before their eyes; they saw if there would be death and hunger, if there would be strife. They well know that there was a place where it could be seen, that there was a book which they called the *Popol Vuh*.

But not only in this way was the estate of the lords great, great also were their fasts. And this was in recognition of their having been created, and in recognition of their having been given their kingdoms. They fasted a long time and made sacrifices to their gods. Here is how they fasted: Nine men fasted and another nine made sacrifices⁵ and burned incense. Thirteen more men fasted, and another thirteen more made offerings and burned incense before Tohil. And

¹The principal branch of the Quiché people.

²The name of the ceremonial center where the temple called *Tzutuhá* was located.

³The Ahpop-Camhá was a coreigning subking. Both the Ahpop and Ahpop-Camhá came from the chief royal family of the Quiché people, the *Cavec*.

⁴Gucumatz and Cotuhá were Ahpop and Ahpop-Camhá

during the fifth generation of the twelve generations of Cavec monarchs who ruled the Quiché prior to the Spanish conquest. They were the first of a line of sorcerer-kings. Quicab and Cavizimah were seventh-generation Cavec monarchs.

⁵Possibly human sacrifices.

while before their god, they nourished themselves only with fruits, with *zapotes*, *matasanos*, and *jocotes*. And they did not eat any *tortillas*. Now if there were seventeen men who made sacrifice, or ten who fasted, the truth is they did not eat. They fulfilled their great precepts, and thus showed their position as lords.

Neither had they women to sleep with, but they remained alone, fasting. They were in the House of God, all day they prayed, burning incense and making sacrifices. Thus they remained from dusk until dawn, grieving in their hearts and in their breasts, and begging for happiness and life for their sons and vassals as well as for their kingdom, and raising their faces to the sky.

Here are their petitions to their god, when they prayed; and this was the supplication of their hearts:

"Oh, Thou, beauty of the day! Thou, Huracán;⁶ Thou, Heart of Heaven and of Earth! Thou, giver of richness, and giver of the daughters and the sons! Turn toward us your power and your riches; grant life and growth unto my sons and vassals; let those who must maintain and nourish Thee multiply and increase; those who invoke Thee on the roads, in the fields, on the banks of the rivers, in the ravines, under the trees, under the vines.

"Give them daughters and sons. Let them not meet disgrace, nor misfortune, let not the deceiver come behind or before them. Let them not fall, let them not be wounded, let them not fornicate, nor be condemned by justice. Let them not fall on the descent or on the ascent of the road. Let them not encounter obstacles back of them or before them, nor anything which strikes them. Grant them good roads, beautiful, level roads. Let them not have misfortune, nor disgrace, through Thy fault, through Thy sorceries.

"Grant a good life to those who must give Thee sustenance and place food in Thy mouth, in Thy

presence, to Thee, Heart of Heaven, Heart of Earth, Bundle of Majesty. And Thou, Tohil; Thou, Avilix;⁷ Thou, Hacavitz,⁸ Arch of the Sky, Surface of the Earth, the Four Corners, the Four Cardinal Points. Let there be but peace and tranquility in Thy mouth, in Thy presence, oh, God!"

Thus [spoke] the lords, while within, the nine men fasted, the thirteen men, and the seventeen men. During the day they fasted and their hearts grieved for their sons and vassals and for all their wives and their children when each of the lords made his offering.

This was the price of a happy life, the price of power, the price of the authority of the Ahpop, of the Ahpop-Camhá, of the Galel and of the Ahtzic-Vinac.⁹ Two by two they ruled, each pair succeeding the other in order to bear the burden of the people of all the Quiché nation.

One only was the origin of their tradition and [one only] the origin of the manner of maintaining and sustaining, and one only, too, was the origin of the tradition and the customs of those of Tamub and Ilocab and the people of Rabinal and the Cakchiquel, those of Tziquinahá, of Tuhalahá and Uchabahá.¹⁰ And there was but one trunk [a single family] when they heard there in Quiché what all of them were to do.

But it was not only thus that they reigned. They did not squander the gifts of those whom they sustained and nourished, but they ate and drank them. Neither did they buy them; they had won and seized their empire, their power, and their sovereignty.

And it was not at small cost, that they conquered the fields and the towns; the small towns and the large towns paid high ransoms; they brought precious stones and metals, they brought honey of the bees, bracelets, bracelets of emeralds and other stones, and brought garlands made of blue feathers, the tribute of all the towns. They

⁶One of Tohil's names.

⁷The god of Balam-Acab, one of the founders of the Quiché state.

⁸The god of the Ahau-Quiché, one of the three royal houses of the Quiché (see note 9).

⁹The Quiché had three royal houses. The Cavec supplied its two chief rulers (note 3). The Galel was a court official who was also king of the House of Nihaib; the Ahtzic-Vinac was head of the House of Ahau Quiché.

¹⁰Various Quiché tribes and regions.

came into the presence of the marvelous kings Gucumatz and Cotuhá, and before Quicab and Cavizimah,¹¹ the Ahpop, the Ahpop-Camhá, the Galel, and the Ahtzic-Vinac.

It was not little what they did, neither were few, the tribes which they conquered. Many branches of the tribes came to pay tribute to the

Quiché; full of sorrow they came to give it over. Nevertheless, the [Quiché] power did not grow quickly. Gucumatz it was, who began the aggrandizement of the kingdom. Thus was the beginning of his aggrandizement and that of the Quiché nation.

¹¹See note 4.

Governing the Inca Empire



100 ▼ *Pedro de Cieza de León, CHRONICLES*

Because no society of South America developed a system of writing, there are no written records of South America's civilizations prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Our best sources for their preconquest history are, therefore, archeological artifacts and accounts composed by sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Amerindian and Spanish writers who labored to preserve the memory of a past in imminent danger of being lost forever. One such ethnohistorian was Pedro de Cieza de León (1520–1554), who in 1535 arrived in the Americas as a teenage soldier-adventurer and spent the next seventeen years trekking throughout South America, falling increasingly under the spell of the continent and its native peoples. As he traveled and fought, he constantly took detailed notes of all he had observed and experienced. Believing, as he noted, that “we and the Indians have the same origin,” Cieza wrote with great sympathy for the many different Amerindian cultures he encountered, even though he seems never to have doubted the righteousness of the Spanish conquest and conversion of these peoples. Indeed, one of his primary reasons for recording his observations was that he considered it “right that the world know how so great a multitude of these Indians were brought into the sanctity of the Church.”

Although Cieza's *Chronicles* describe many different native South American cultures, their greatest value to modern historians is the wealth of detail they provide of the Inca Empire and the Quechua Amerindians who had created it. Like the Aztecs of Mexico far to their north, the Quechuas were recent arrivals on the scene who fashioned a civilization that borrowed heavily from a variety of preceding cultures. Also like the Aztec Empire, the Inca Empire was young, having taken shape during the reigns of Pachacuti (1438–1471) and his son Topac Yupanqui (1471–1493). As was also true in Mexico, its life was prematurely cut short by *conquistadores*.

In the following selection Cieza describes how the Inca monarchs governed an empire that covered about one-half million square miles, stretched some twenty-five hundred miles from end to end, and included anywhere from six to thirteen million people of different ethnic origins and languages.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What devices did the Incas use to govern their vast empire?
2. How did the Inca Empire manage to function without a system of writing?
3. From Cieza's perspective, what were the most admirable qualities of this empire?
4. What appear to have been the strengths of this empire? Can you perceive any weaknesses? Were the Incas aware of these shortcomings, and, if so, how did they attempt to counter them?

It is told for a fact of the rulers of this kingdom that in the days of their rule they had their representatives in the capitals of all the provinces, . . . for in all these places there were larger and finer lodgings than in most of the other cities of this great kingdom, and many storehouses. They served as the head of the provinces or regions, and from every so many leagues¹ around the tributes were brought to one of these capitals, and from so many others, to another. This was so well organized that there was not a village that did not know where it was to send its tribute. In all these capitals the Incas had temples of the sun, mints, and many silversmiths who did nothing but work rich pieces of gold or fair vessels of silver; large garrisons were stationed there, and, as I have said, a steward or representative who was in command of them all, to whom an accounting of everything that was brought in was made, and who, in turn, had to give one of all that was issued. And these governors could in no way interfere with the jurisdiction of another who held a similar post, but within his own, if there were any disorder or disturbance, he had authority to punish it[s perpetrators], especially if it were in the nature of a conspiracy or a rebellion, or failure to obey the Inca,² for full power

resided in these governors. And if the Incas had not had the foresight to appoint them and to establish the *mitimaes*,³ the natives would have often revolted and shaken off the royal rule; but with the many troops and the abundance of provisions, they could not effect this unless they had all plotted such treason or rebellion together. This happened rarely, for these governors who were named were of complete trust, all of them *Orejones*,⁴ and most of them had their holdings, or *chacaras*, in the neighborhood of *Cuzco*,⁵ and their homes and kinfolk. If one of them did not show sufficient capacity for his duties, he was removed and another put in his place.

When one of them came to Cuzco on private business or to see the Inca, he left a lieutenant in his place, not one who aspired to the post, but one he knew would faithfully carry out what he was ordered to do and what was best for the service of the Inca. And if one of these governors or delegates died while in office, the natives at once sent word to the Inca how and of what he had died, and even transported the body by the post road if this seemed to them advisable. The tribute paid by each of these districts where the capital was situated and that turned over by the natives, whether gold, silver, clothing, arms, and

¹A league is three miles.

²*Inca* means "sovereign lord," and in its strictest sense should be used only to refer to this civilization's god-kings. Today, however, historians customarily use the term loosely to refer to the civilization, its empire, and the Quechua people who created them.

³Literally, "those moved from one land to another." This was the systematic practice of resettling groups from one area of the empire to another. These resettled people would serve as a check on the loyalties of the natives of the region

to which they had been transferred and would, in turn, be kept in check by their new neighbors. This helped keep down rebellions and broke down regional and ethnic differences within the empire; it also was a means of cultivating land that needed settlers.

⁴Literally in Spanish, "big-ears." They were members of the ruling class, often of royal blood, who were distinguished by the large ear plugs they wore.

⁵The capital city of the empire.

all else they gave, was entered in the accounts of . . . [those] who kept the *quipus*⁶ and did everything ordered by the governor in the matter of finding the soldiers or supplying whomever the Inca ordered, or making delivery to Cuzco; but when they came from the city of Cuzco to go over the accounts, or they were ordered to go to Cuzco to give an accounting, the accountants themselves gave it by the quipus, or went to give it where there could be no fraud, but everything had to come out right. Few years went by in which an accounting of all these things was not made. . . .

Realizing how difficult it would be to travel the great distances of their land where every league and at every turn a different language was spoken, and how bothersome it would be to have to employ interpreters to understand them, these rulers, as the best measure, ordered and decreed, with severe punishment for failure to obey, that all the natives of their empire should know and understand the language of Cuzco, both they and their women. This was so strictly enforced that an infant had not yet left its mother's breast before they began to teach it the language it had to know. And although at the beginning this was difficult and many stubbornly refused to learn any language but their own, the Incas were so forceful that they accomplished what they had proposed, and all had to do their bidding. This was carried out so faithfully that in the space of a few years a single tongue was known and used in an extension of more than 1,200 leagues, yet, even though this language was employed, they all spoke their own [languages], which were so numerous that if I were to list them it would not be credited. . . .

As the city of Cuzco was the most important in all Peru, and the Incas lived there most of the time, they had with them in the city many of the leading men of the country, the most intelligent and informed of all, as their advisers. For all agree that before they undertook anything of

importance, they discussed it with these counselors, and submitted their opinion to that of the majority. And for the administration of the city, and that the highways should be safe and nowhere should offenses or thefts be committed, from among the most highly esteemed of them he [the Inca] appointed those whose duty it was to punish wrongdoers, and to this end they were always traveling about the country. The Incas took such care to see that justice was meted out that nobody ventured to commit a felony or theft. This was to deal with thieves, ravishers of women, or conspirators against the Inca; however, there were many provinces that warred on one another, and the Incas were not wholly able to prevent this.

By the river that runs through Cuzco justice was executed on those who were caught or brought in as prisoners from some other place. There they had their heads cut off, or were put to death in some other manner which they chose. Mutiny and conspiracy were severely punished, and, above all, those who were thieves and known as such; even their wives and children were despised and considered to be tarred with the same brush. . . .

We have written how it was ordered by the Incas that the statues be brought out at their feasts, and how they selected from the wisest among their men those who should tell what the life of their kings had been and how they had conducted themselves in the rule of their kingdoms, for the purpose I have stated. It should also be known that, aside from this, it was the custom among them, and a rule carefully observed, for each of them to choose during his reign three or four old men of their nation, skilled and gifted for that purpose, whom they ordered to recall all that had happened in the province during the time of their reign, whether prosperous or adverse, and to make and arrange songs so that thereby it might be known in the future what had taken place in the past. Such songs

⁶The Quechua system of record keeping by means of knotted strings that León describes later in this excerpt.

could not be sung or proclaimed outside the presence of the Inca, and those who were to carry out this behest were ordered to say nothing referring to the Inca during his lifetime, but after he was dead, they said to his successor almost in these words: "Oh, mighty and powerful Inca, may the Sun and Moon, the Earth, the hills and trees, the stones and your forefathers guard you from misfortune and make you prosperous, happy, and blessed among all who have been born. Know that the things that happened to your predecessor were these." And saying this, with their eyes on the ground and heads hanging, with great humility they gave an account and report of all they knew, which they could do very well, for there were many among them of great memory, subtle wit, and lively intelligence, and abounding in knowledge, as those of us who are here and hear them can bear witness. After they said this, when the Inca had heard them, he sent for other of his old Indians whom he ordered to learn the songs the others bore in their memory, and to prepare new ones of what took place during the time of his reign, what was spent, what the provinces contributed, and put all this down in the quipus, so that after his death, when his successor reigned, what had been given and contributed would be known. And except on days of great celebration, or on the occasion of mourning and lament for the death of a brother or son of the Inca, for on such days it was permitted to relate their grandeur and their origin and birth, at no other time was it permitted to deal with this, for it had been forbidden by their lords, and if they did so, they were severely punished.

[The Indians] had a method of knowing how the tributes of food supplies should be levied on the provinces when the Lord-Inca came through with his army, or was visiting the kingdom; or, when nothing of this sort was taking place, what came into the storehouses and what was issued to the subjects, so nobody could be unduly burdened. . . . This involved the quipus, which are long strands of knotted strings, and those who were the accountants and understood the mean-

ing of these knots could reckon by them expenditures or other things that had taken place many years before. By these knots they counted from one to ten and from ten to a hundred, and from a hundred to a thousand. On one of these strands there is the account of one thing, and on the other of another, in such a way that what to us is a strange, meaningless account is clear to them. In the capital of each province there were accountants whom they called *quipu-camayocs*, and by these knots they kept the account of the tribute to be paid by the natives of that district in silver, gold, clothing, flocks, down to wood and other more insignificant things, and by these same quipus at the end of a year, or ten, or twenty years, they gave a report to the one whose duty it was to check the account so exact that not even a pair of sandals was missing. . . .

The *Orejones* of Cuzco who supplied me with information are in agreement that in olden times, in the days of the Lord-Incas, all the villages and provinces of Peru were notified that a report should be given to the rulers and their representatives each year of the men and women who had died, and all who had been born, for this was necessary for the levying of the tributes as well as to know how many were available for war and those who could assume the defense of the villages. This was an easy matter, for each province at the end of the year had a list by the knots of the quipus of all the people who had died there during the year, as well as of those who had been born. At the beginning of the new year they came to Cuzco, bringing their quipus, which told how many births there had been during the year, and how many deaths. This was reported with all truth and accuracy, without any fraud or deceit. In this way the Inca and the governors knew which of the Indians were poor, the women who had been widowed, whether they were able to pay their taxes, and how many men they could count on in the event of war, and many other things they considered highly important.

As this kingdom was so vast, as I have repeatedly mentioned, in each of the many provinces there were many storehouses filled with supplies

and other needful things; thus, in times of war, wherever the armies went they drew upon the contents of these storehouses, without ever touching the supplies of their confederates or laying a finger on what they had in their settlements. And when there was no war, all this stock of supplies and food was divided up among the poor and the widows. These poor were the aged, or the lame, crippled, or paralyzed, or those afflicted with some other diseases; if they were in good health, they received nothing. Then the storehouses were filled up once more with the tributes paid the Inca. If there came a lean year, the storehouses were opened and the provinces were lent what they needed in the way of supplies; then, in a year of abundance, they paid back all they had received. Even though the tributes paid to the Inca were used only for the aforesaid purposes, they were employed to advantage, for in this way their kingdom was opulent and well supplied.

No one who was lazy or tried to live by the work of others was tolerated; everyone had to work. Thus on certain days each lord went to his lands and took the plow in hand and cultivated the earth, and did other things. Even the Incas themselves did this to set an example, for everybody was to know that there should be nobody so rich that, on this account, he might disdain or affront the poor. And under their system there was none such in all the kingdom, for, if he had his health, he worked and lacked for nothing; and if he was ill, he received what he needed from the storehouses. And no rich man could deck himself out in more finery than the poor, or wear different clothing, except the rulers and headmen, who, to maintain their dignity, were allowed great freedom and privilege, as well as the *Orejones*, who held a place apart among all the peoples.

Chapter 2

Adventurers, Merchants, Diplomats, Pilgrims, and Missionaries

A Half Millennium of Travel and
Encounter: 1000–1500

The era from roughly 1000 to about 1500 witnessed large-scale movements of individuals and peoples across much of the Afro-Eurasian Ecumene, and it also witnessed direct contacts between Europe and the Americas. The first of the recorded contacts between Europeans and Americans proved to be a dead end; the second, however, became an epochal event that set the history of the entire human community onto a new plane. Whereas the exploits of Scandinavian seafarers who reached the shores of North America around the year 1000 left no permanent imprint on either the Americas or Europe, the arrival of Spaniards in the Americas just before the year 1500 transformed both civilizations and, ultimately, the world.

Long before Columbus and his Portuguese counterparts set sail, however, the Old Afro-Eurasian World was well on its way toward becoming the home of an increasingly interconnected human community. Turks out of the steppes of Central Asia converted to Islam and then spread their faith and culture into India, the Balkan region of southeastern Europe, and deeper into their traditional Central Asian homeland as they carved out and expanded a variety of states. In Western Europe, Scandinavian adventurers (known as *Vikings*, *Norse*, and *Northmen*) first pillaged and then settled in Ireland,

England, western France, Iceland, and various other places. With the exception of the Scandinavians who settled in Russia and accepted Byzantine Christianity, the Vikings converted to Western Christianity, and during the eleventh century these new members of the faith of Rome became a sharp cutting edge of militant, expansionistic Western Christendom. Norse who had settled in France and had become *Norman* French expanded the boundaries of European Christendom into the Mediterranean. During the last half of the eleventh century Norman adventurers conquered southern Italy from the Byzantine Empire and Sicily from its Islamic overlords. These same Normans assaulted the Balkan possessions of the emperor at Constantinople and became an integral part of medieval Western Europe's most energetic and protracted overseas colonial adventure — the crusades in the Levant. Of all the catalysts of cultural exchange, the most explosive and impressive were the Mongols. In the course of the thirteenth century, they created a Eurasian land empire that reached from the Pacific to Ukraine. After the initial shock of their conquests, they established a *Pax Mongolica* (Mongol Peace) that opened up lines of direct communication between East Asia and Western Europe. For about a century, people, goods, ideas, and even diseases traveled faster than ever before from one end of the Eurasian landmass to the other.

A number of factors combined by 1400 to sever most of the overland routes between Europe and China that had opened up in the thirteenth century. They included the onslaught of the Eurasian-wide pandemic of the Black Death in the mid fourteenth century; massive economic depression that affected lands and peoples throughout Eurasia; the breakup of the Mongol Empire around the middle of the fourteenth century; the disruption of the ancient Silk Road routes of Inner Asia by the armies of the Turkish conqueror *Timur the Lame* (Tamerlane) between 1369 and 1405; the increasing antipathy toward foreigners and foreign adventure shown by China's *Ming* Dynasty (1368–1644); and the successes of the Ottoman Turks, who swept through Anatolia and the Balkans, finally capturing Constantinople in 1453.

To be sure, there was still a trickle of Western contact with Central, South, and East Asia in the early and mid fifteenth century. A handful of European merchants and adventurers even managed to reach the waters of the Indian Ocean by way of either the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless, the heady days of regular mercantile and missionary contacts with the fabled land of *Cathay*, as China was called in the West, were now at an end — at least for the moment.

With the land routes now blocked, it fell to the kingdoms of Europe's Iberian Peninsula that had ports on the Atlantic to attempt contact by way of the ocean. The results of their attempts proved quite extraordinary. During the last decade of the fifteenth century, Spain supported an enterprise that resulted in the European discovery of the Americas, and Portugal pushed into the Indian Ocean by way of Africa and also stumbled across Brazil in 1500.

The World Perceived

As we shall see in this chapter, the Mongol Empire established an environment conducive to long-distance travel and cultural interchange by providing an avenue across Eurasia from the Pacific Ocean to the Black Sea. We would be wrong, however, to think that long-distance travel and cultural interaction only occurred as the result of conquest and state-building. Long before the rise of the Mongol Empire, hundreds of thousands, even millions, of anonymous men and women traveling as merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, diplomats, and curiosity seekers had already made long-distance travel and its consequent cultural exchanges an important historical phenomenon. This was especially true after 1000. Indian and Chinese merchants traveled into Southeast Asia, where they influenced the evolution of a hybrid culture that has been termed *Indo-Chinese*. Arabs and Berbers in camel caravans trekked across the desert to trade salt and manufactured goods for the gold, ivory, and slaves of sub-Saharan West Africa. Italian merchants established bases in the Black Sea on the western edge of Central Asia. African, Arab, Indian, Southeast Asian, Chinese, and even a few European sailors shared the waters of the Indian Ocean. Pilgrims of many different faiths often traveled great distances to worship at their holy sites. Islamic and Christian missionaries, motivated by devotion and love, labored among foreign people who they believed would be damned to Hell without spiritual guidance. Envoys in the service of princes and spiritual leaders regularly carried important messages to faraway potentates, and some states, such as Genoa and Venice, even established resident ambassadors in distant lands. And then there were the curiosity seekers and adventurers, who simply traveled for the sheer joy and experience of it all. As the following three sources suggest, all of this travel and cross-cultural interchange had a profound impact on the ways in which people learned of and envisioned the world beyond their immediate frontiers.

A Chinese View of the World

101 ▼ *Zhau Rugua*,*A DESCRIPTION OF FOREIGN PEOPLES*

During the Age of Southern Song (1127–1279) China carried on extensive overseas trade, especially in the waters of the Indian Ocean. Indeed, China was the world leader in naval technology during that period, with ships that were larger and more seaworthy than those of any other culture. Chinese ships sailed as far west as the Arabian Peninsula and the northern regions of Africa's east coast, although most Chinese oceanic commerce was conducted nearer to home in the waters of Southeast Asia and India, where merchants from many lands traded for both local commodities and goods brought to Indian and Southeast Asian ports from points quite a bit farther away.

Toward the mid thirteenth century, a distant descendant of the Emperor Tang Taizong (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 69) was appointed Inspector of Foreign Trade for the province of Fujian, which is located along China's southern coast. As inspector, he would have been responsible for levying and collecting tariffs on imported goods at Quanzhou, the province's major port. About all we know of him is his name, *Zhau Rugua*, and the fact that he composed a descriptive catalogue of the various foreign peoples and products that China had come to know and know of through its trade networks. It is almost certain that none of his knowledge of overseas lands and cultures was firsthand. Rather, he borrowed liberally from an earlier handbook of this sort composed by Zhou Kufei in 1178. For the rest, Zhau Rugua appears to have gathered some of his information from Chinese merchants and sailors at Quanzhou, but most of it seems to have come from foreign merchants, especially Arabs. China's southern coastal cities, as well as its interior cities along the Silk Road, were home to large communities of resident alien merchants, who were attracted by the enormous profit potential offered by commerce with the Middle Kingdom. It is no exaggeration to state that China was the engine that drove Eurasia's economy during this half millennium.

The lands that Zhau Rugua described extended from Spain and Morocco in the west to Borneo in the east, and the foreign commodities that he described included such exotics as rose water from Arabia and ambergris from the waters off East Africa. Throughout his catalogue Zhau Rugua makes clear the central role played by Arab merchant sailors, like Sinbad (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 78), in carrying this high volume and variety of goods throughout the waters of the Indian Ocean and beyond. Indeed, most of the foreign lands that Zhau Rugua catalogued were part of the expanding global community of Islam. For that reason, we turn to his descriptions of Arabia — a land he knew as the country of the *Dashi* — and southern Spain, which was still in Islamic hands.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Compare the late-twelfth-century voyage from Quanzhou to overseas lands with the voyage that Faxian made from Ceylon to China in the early fifth century (Chapter 5 Vol. A, source 40). What has changed, and what has remained the same? What conclusions follow from your answers?
2. How accurately does Zhau Rugua describe the climate, landscape, and culture of the land(s) of the Dashi? What conclusions follow from your answer?
3. Assuming that Zhau Rugua reflects an informed Chinese view of the land(s) of the Arabs, how would you characterize the way in which the Arabs' land, markets, and products were seen by the Chinese? What conclusions follow from your answer?
4. What do the products traded by the Arabs suggest about late-twelfth-century commerce in the Indian Ocean?
5. How accurate is Zhau Rugua's description of southern Spain and the regions to its north?

THE LAND OF THE DASHI¹

The Dashi are to the west and northwest of Quanzhou² at a very great distance from it, so that foreign ships find it difficult to make a direct voyage there. After these ships have left Quanzhou they arrive in some forty days at Lanli,³ where they trade. The following year they go to sea again, when with the aid of the regular wind,⁴ they take some sixty days to make the journey.

The products of the country⁵ are for the most part brought to Sanfozi,⁶ where they are sold to merchants who forward them to China.

This country of the Dashi is powerful and warlike. Its extent is very great, and its inhabitants are preeminent among all foreigners for their distinguished bearing. The climate throughout a large part of it is cold, snow falling to a depth

of two or three feet; consequently rugs are much prized.

The capital of the country, called Maluoba,⁷ is an important center for the trade of foreign peoples. . . . The streets are more than fifty feet broad; in the middle is a roadway twenty feet broad and four feet high for use of camels, horses, and oxen carrying goods about. On either side, for the convenience of pedestrians' business, there are sidewalks paved with green and bluish black flagstones of surpassing beauty. . . .

Very rich persons use a measure instead of scales in business transactions of gold or silver. The markets are noisy and bustling, and are filled with a great store of gold and silver damasks, brocades,⁸ and similar wares. The artisans have the true artistic spirit.

The king, the officials, and all the people serve Heaven. They also have a Buddha by the name

¹The Arabs.

²The Arabs knew this important port city as *Zayton* (as also did Marco Polo).

³A port on the extreme northwestern coast of the island of Sumatra in Southeast Asia.

⁴The monsoon trade winds.

⁵Arabia. This sentence is confusing, inasmuch as the author has suddenly shifted his focus from merchants traveling by way of Sumatra to Arabia to merchants bringing their goods destined for China to Sumatra.

⁶The port of Palembang on the southeast coast of Sumatra.

⁷The coastal trading center of Merbat on the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Aden, which was located in the same region and was the Arabs' primary center for trade with Africa and India, is strangely not mentioned by name in this book.

⁸Both are richly patterned fabrics.

of Mahiawu.⁹ Every seven days they cut their hair and clip their fingernails. At the New Year for a whole month they fast and chant prayers.¹⁰ Daily they pray to Heaven five times.

The peasants work their fields without fear of floods or droughts; a sufficiency of water for irrigation is supplied by a river whose source is not known. During the season when no cultivation is in progress, the level of the river remains even with the banks; with the beginning of cultivation it rises day by day. Then it is that an official is appointed to watch the river and to await the highest water level, when he summons the people, who then plow and sow their fields. When they have had enough water, the river returns to its former level.¹¹

There is a great harbor in this country, over two hundred feet deep, which opens to the south-east on the sea and has branches connecting with all quarters of the country.¹² On either bank of the harbor the people have their dwellings and here daily are held fairs, where boats and wagons crowd in, all laden with hemp, wheat, millet, beans, sugar, meal, oil, . . . fowl, sheep, geese, ducks, fish, shrimp, date cakes, grapes, and other fruits.

The products of the country consist of pearls, ivory, rhinoceros horns, frankincense, ambergris,¹³ . . . cloves, nutmegs, benzoin,¹⁴ aloes,¹⁵ myrrh¹⁶ dragon's blood,¹⁷ . . . borax, opaque and transparent glass, . . . coral, cat's eyes,¹⁸ gardenia flowers, rosewater, nutgalls,¹⁹ yellow wax, soft gold brocades, camel's-hair cloth, . . . and foreign satins.

⁹Muhammad.

¹⁰The month of Ramadan.

¹¹This has to be a reference to Egypt's Nile Valley.

¹²This seems to refer to Basra, which is located in southern Iraq, at the head of the Persian Gulf.

¹³A waxy substance that sperm whales expel and which is added to perfumes.

¹⁴A tree resin used for medicine and perfume.

¹⁵A laxative drug processed from the juice of African aloe plants.

¹⁶An aromatic resin that was used for perfume and incense and also as a mild narcotic.

¹⁷Another aromatic tree resin.

¹⁸Semiprecious gems.

¹⁹Tree burls, or knots, formed by parasites. These were

The foreign traders who deal in these wares bring them to Sanfozi and to Foluoan²⁰ to barter. . . .

The country of Magia²¹ is reached by traveling eighty days westward by land from the country of Maluoba. This is where the Buddha Mahiawu was born. In the House of the Buddha²² the walls are made of jade stone of every color. Every year, when the anniversary of the death of the Buddha comes around,²³ people from all the countries of the Dashi assemble here, when they vie with each other in bringing presents of gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones. Then also is the House adorned anew with silk brocade.

Farther off there is the tomb of the Buddha.²⁴ Continually by day and night there is at this place such a brilliant radiance that no one can approach it; he who does is blinded. Whoever in the hour of his death rubs his breast with dirt taken from this tomb will, so they say, be restored to life again by the power of the Buddha.

MULANPI²⁵

The country of Mulanpi is to the west of the Dashi country. There is a great sea, and to the west of this sea there are countless countries, but Mulanpi is the one country which is visited by the big ships of the Dashi. Putting to sea from Dobandi²⁶ in the country of the Dashi, after sailing due west for a full hundred days, one reaches this country. A single one of these ships of theirs carries several thousand men,²⁷ and on board they

highly prized by wood carvers because of their interesting shapes.

²⁰Beranang on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula.

²¹The city of Mecca.

²²The Ka'ba (see Chapter 8 Vol. A, source 58).

²³The hajj (Chapter 8 Vol. A, source 62) is not connected to the anniversary of the Prophet's death.

²⁴In Medina.

²⁵Southern Spain, which was part of the Almohad Empire of western North Africa from around 1147 until the empire's disintegration after 1223 due to a bitter war of succession.

²⁶Damietta in Egypt.

²⁷A gross exaggeration.

have stores of wine and provisions, as well as weaving looms. If one speaks of big ships, there are none so big as those of Mulanpi.

The products of this country are extraordinary. The grains of wheat are three inches long, the melons six feet round, enough for a meal for twenty or thirty men. The pomegranates weigh five catties,²⁸ lemons over twenty catties, salad greens weigh over ten catties and have leaves three or four feet long. Rice and wheat are kept in silos for ten years without spoiling. Among the native products are foreign sheep that are

several feet high and have tails as big as a fan.²⁹ In the springtime they slit open their bellies and take out some ten catties of fat, after which they sew them up again, and the sheep live on; if the fat were not removed, the animal would swell up and die.³⁰

If one travels by land [from Mulanpi] two hundred days' journey, the days are only six hours long.³¹ In autumn if the west wind arises, men and beasts must at once drink to keep alive, and if they are not quick enough about it they die of thirst.³²

²⁸A *catty* was six hundred grams, or about one and one-third pounds.

²⁹These would be Ethiopian broad-tailed sheep, which were not to be found in Spain.

³⁰This fantastic story might be based on the southern Span-

ish custom of slaughtering pigs in the springtime by cutting them lengthwise in this manner.

³¹The short winter days of northern Europe.

³²Hot dry winds do blow off the Sahara and reach southern Europe, where they can make life miserable.

A European View of the World



102 ▼ John Mandeville, *TRAVELS*

If Zhau Rugua's catalogue illustrates a well-informed Chinese bureaucrat's vision of the world, a curious work ascribed to a largely unknown person named *Sir John Mandeville* illustrates the Western European view of that same globe. First appearing in Europe between 1356 and 1366, Mandeville's *Travels* purported to be the firsthand account of an English knight's trans-Eurasian adventures between 1322 and 1356, in which he claimed to have served both the sultan of Egypt and the Mongol khan of China. There is every good reason to believe this work is largely a fictional tour de force by a gifted author who masked his identity behind the pen name *John Mandeville* and whose expeditions were largely to European libraries, where he discovered quite a few travel books from which he borrowed liberally. There is some evidence that suggests Mandeville, or whatever his name was, traveled to the eastern Mediterranean, but he seems to have gone no farther east. The basic outline of Sir John's vividly described travels to the Indies and Cathay is plagiarized from the genuine travel account of the Franciscan missionary Odoric of Pordenone (ca. 1265–1331), who spent thirty-five years in Russia and Asia, including three years as an assistant to Archbishop John of Monte Corvino in Khanbalik (source 106). Mandeville amplified Friar Odoric's rather spare story by adding fables and tales from many other authors, by giving free rein to his own fertile imagination and sardonic wit, and by spicing his story with an impressive array of geographic and astronomical theories, many of them based on Arabic science.

No matter the book's questionable origins, Mandeville's *Travels*, written originally in French, was widely circulated and translated into almost every European

language by 1400. Indeed, it became late medieval Europe's most popular travelogue in an age noted for its fascination with world travel. Even if Sir John (if that was his name) did not travel to all of the regions he claimed to have visited, his work is historically important because it illustrates the manner in which Europeans of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries viewed the lands and peoples beyond their frontiers. Indeed, in many ways Mandeville was instrumental in shaping that vision of the outside world on the eve of Europe's overseas explorations.

In the first selection Sir John deals with the shape and size of the Earth. Most people today are unaware that the notion that medieval European scholars believed the world was flat is a modern myth created, tongue in cheek, by the American humorist and writer Washington Irving in the nineteenth century. In the second selection Mandeville shares his putative firsthand knowledge of the wondrous land of *Prester John*, descendant of the *Magi*, or the Three Wise Kings from the East, who had visited the Christ Child. Prester John (John the priest), whose existence was firmly accepted in the West from the mid twelfth century onward, was the mythic priestly emperor of some supposedly lost Christian people. The Prester John myth was born partly out of rumors of actual distant Christian cultures — such as the Ethiopians of Africa, the Nestorians of Central and East Asia, and the Saint Thomas Christians of India's west coast — and partly out of a crusading zeal to discover Christian allies in the war against Islam. As a consequence, European adventurers as late as the sixteenth century sought Prester John in Asia and Africa.

One thing to keep in mind as you read these excerpts is that many scholars have concluded that although Mandeville certainly meant to amuse his readers, his charming stories also had a serious purpose. These commentators argue that Mandeville often used his descriptions of the exotic peoples and places whom he had supposedly encountered as a way of subtly pointing out the shortcomings of his own Christian Europe.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What was Sir John's view of the physical world? Be specific.
2. What do Mandeville's stories suggest about his attitudes toward alien customs and the world beyond Europe?
3. Many societies cherish a myth of a promised redeemer, or hero-to-come. How had the Christian West created in the mythic Prester John a person who represented the fulfillment of some of their deepest wishes?
4. In what ways, if at all, does Sir John seem to use these stories to point out his own society's flaws?
5. Reread the tale of Sinbad the Sailor (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 78) and Zhau Rugua's description of southern Spain. Leaving details aside, can you discover any common themes shared by these accounts and Mandeville's stories? What do those common motifs suggest to you?

OF THE FOUL CUSTOMS
FOLLOWED IN THE ISLE OF
LAMORY¹ AND HOW THE
EARTH AND SEA ARE OF
ROUND SHAPE, PROVED BY
MEANS OF THE STAR ATLANTIC

From India people go by the ocean sea by way of many islands and different countries, which it would be tedious for me to relate. Fifty-two days' journey from that land there is another large country called Lamary. That land is extremely hot, so that the custom there is for men and women to walk about totally naked, and they scorn foreigners who wear clothes. They say that God created Adam and Eve naked, and no person, therefore, should be ashamed to appear as God made him, because nothing that comes from nature's bounty is foul. They also say that people who wear clothes are from another world, or else they are people who do not believe in God. They say that they believe in God who created the world and made Adam and Eve and everything else. Here they do not marry wives, since all the women are common to all men, and no woman forsakes any man. They say that it is sinful to refuse any man, for God so commanded it of Adam and Eve and all who followed when he said: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth."² Therefore, no man in that country may say: "This is my wife." No woman may say: "This is my husband." When they bear children, the women present them to whatever man they wish of those with whom they have had sexual relations. So also all land is held in common. What one man holds one year, another has another year, and everyone takes that portion which he desires. Also all the produce of the soil is held in common. This is true for grains and other goods as well. Nothing is held in private, nothing is locked up,

and every person there takes what he wants without anyone saying "no." Each is as rich as the other.

There is, however, in that country an evil custom. They eat human flesh more happily than any other meat, this despite the fact that the land abounds in meats, fish, grains, gold, silver, and every other commodity. Merchants go there, bringing with them children to sell to the people of that country, and they purchase the children. If they are plump, they eat them immediately. If they are lean, they feed them until they fatten up, and then they eat them. They say this is the best and sweetest flesh in all the world.

In that land, and in many others beyond it, no one can see the Transmontane Star, known as the Star of the Sea, which is immoveable and stands in the north and is called the Lode Star.³ They see, rather, another star, its opposite, which stands in the south and is called the Antarctic Star. Just as sailors here get their bearings and steer by the Lode Star, so sailors beyond those parts steer by the southern star, which we cannot see. So our northern star, which we call the Lode Star, cannot be seen there. This is proof that the earth and sea are round in shape and form. For portions of the heavens that are seen in one country do not appear in another. . . . I can prove that point by what I have observed, for I have been in parts of Brabant⁴ and seen, by means of an astrolabe, that the Transmontane Star is 53 degrees in elevation. In Germany and Bohemia it is 58 degrees; and farther north it is 62 degrees and some minutes high. I personally have measured it with an astrolabe. Understand that opposite the Transmontane Star is the other known as the Antarctic Star, as I have said. These two stars never move, and around them all the heavens revolve, just like a wheel about an axle. So those two stars divide the heavens into two equal parts, with as much above [the equator] as below. . . .

¹Sumatra, which the Chinese called *Lanli* (source 101).

²The Bible, Genesis, 1:22.

³Polaris, or the North Star, which guides mariners.

⁴A region between modern Belgium and the Netherlands.

I say with certainty that people can encircle the entire world, below the equator as well as above,⁵ and return to their homelands, provided they have good company, a ship, and health. And all along the way one would find people, lands, and islands. . . . For you know well that those people who live right under the Antarctic Star are directly underneath, feet against feet, of those who dwell directly under the Transmontane Star,⁶ just as we and those who dwell under us⁷ are feet to feet. For every part of the sea and the land has its opposite, which balances it, and it is both habitable and traversable. . . . So people who travel to India and the foreign isles girdle the roundness of the earth and the seas, passing under our countries in this hemisphere.

Something I heard as a youth has occurred to me often. A worthy man from our country departed some time ago to see the world. And so he passed through India and the islands beyond India, which number more than 5,000.⁸ He traveled so far by sea and land and had so girdled the globe over the period of so many seasons that he found an island where he heard his own language being spoken. . . . He marveled at this, not knowing what to make of it. I conclude he had traveled so far by land and sea that he had encircled the entire globe, circumnavigating to the very frontier of his homeland. Had he traveled only a bit farther, he would have come to his own home. But he turned back, returning along the route by which he had come. And so he spent a great deal of painful labor, as he acknowledged, when he returned home much later. For afterwards he went to Norway, where a storm carried him to an island. While on that island he discovered it was the island where earlier he had heard his own language spoken.⁹ . . .

That could well be true, even though it might seem to simple-minded persons of no learning

that people cannot travel on the underside of the world without falling off toward the heavens. That, however, is not possible, unless it is true that we also are liable to fall toward heaven from where we are on the earth. For whatever part of the earth people inhabit, above or below [the equator], it always seems to them that they are in a more proper position than any other folk. And so it is right that just as it seems to us that they are under us, so it seems to them that we are beneath them. For if a person could fall from the earth into the heavens, it is more reasonable to assume that the earth and sea, which are more vast and of greater weight, should fall into the heavens. But that is impossible. . . .

Although it is possible for a person to circumnavigate the world, nonetheless, out of a 1,000 persons, one might possibly return home. For, given the magnitude of the earth and the sea, a 1,000 people could venture forth and follow a 1,000 different routes. This being so, no person could plot a perfect route toward the place from where he left. He could only reach it by accident or the grace of God. For the earth is very large and is some 20,425 miles in circumference, according to the opinion of wise astronomers from the past, whose words I am not going to contradict, even though it seems to me, with my limited understanding and with all due respect, that it is larger.¹⁰

OF THE ROYAL ESTATE OF PRESTER JOHN

This emperor, Prester John, commands a very large region and has many noble cities and fair towns in his realm, as well as many islands large and broad. For this land of India is divided into islands due to the great rivers that flow out of

⁵Here Mandeville refutes a notion, accepted by classical Greco-Roman geographers, that the *antipodes*, or lands south of the equator, are uninhabitable due to their extreme heat.

⁶In other words, the South Pole is 180 degrees south of (or under) the North Pole.

⁷The place directly opposite on the globe.

⁸The islands of Southeast Asia.

⁹This story, especially in light of the passage that follows, seems to claim that the Englishman traveled south to India and the islands of Southeast Asia and then continued south across the South Pole and up the far side of the globe across the North Pole to Scandinavia, and then he returned home by retracing his steps.

¹⁰Actually, it is closer to twenty-five thousand miles.

Paradise, dividing the land into many parts.¹¹ He also has many islands in the sea. . . . This Prester John has many kings and islands and many different peoples of various cultures subject to him. And this land is fertile and wealthy, but not as wealthy as the land of the Great Khan. For merchants do not as commonly travel there to purchase merchandise as they do to the land of the Great Khan, for it is too far to travel to. Moreover, people can find in that other region, the Island of Cathay, every manner of commodity that people need — gold cloth, silk, spices, and every sort of precious item. Consequently, even though commodities are less expensive in Prester John's island, nonetheless people dread the long voyage and the great sea-perils in that region. . . . Although one must travel by sea and land eleven or twelve months from Genoa or Venice before arriving in Cathay, the land of Prester John lies many more days of dreadful journey away. . . .

The Emperor Prester John always marries the daughter of the Great Khan, and the Great Khan likewise marries Prester John's daughter.¹² For they are the two greatest lords under heaven.

In Prester John's land there are many different things and many precious gems of such magnitude that people make vessels, such as platters, dishes, and cups, out of them. There are many other marvels there, so many, in fact, that it would be tiresome and too lengthy to put them down in a book . . . but I shall tell you some part.

This Emperor Prester John is Christian, as is a great part of his country as well. Yet they do not share all the articles of our faith. They believe fully in God, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. They are quite devout and faithful to one another, and they do not quarrel or practice fraud and deceit.

He has subject to him 72 provinces, and in every province there is a king. And these kings have kings under them, and all are tributaries to Prester John. And he has in his lordships many marvels. In his country is a sea that people call the Gravelly Sea.¹³ It is all gravel and sand, without a drop of water, and it ebbs and flows in great waves, as other seas do, and never rests at any time. No one can cross that sea by ship or any other craft and, therefore, no one knows what land lies beyond that sea. Although it has no water, people find in it and on its banks plenty of good fish of a shape and size such as are found nowhere else, but they are tasty and delicious to eat. Three days journey from that sea are great mountains, out of which flows a great river that originates in Paradise. And it is full of precious stones, without a drop of water. . . . Beyond that river, rising toward the deserts, is a great gravel plain set between the mountains. On that plain everyday at sunrise small trees begin to grow, and they grow until mid-day, bearing fruit. No one dares, however, to eat the fruit, for it is like a deceptive phantom. After mid-day the trees decrease and reenter the earth, so that by sunset they are no longer to be seen. And they do this every day. And that is a great marvel. In that desert are many wild people who are hideous to look at, for they are horned and do not speak but only grunt like pigs. . . .

When Emperor Prester John goes into battle against any other lord, he has no banners borne before him. Rather, he has three crosses of fine gold, which are massive and very tall and encrusted with precious stones. Each cross is set in a richly adorned chariot. To guard each cross, there is a detail of 10,000 mounted men at arms and 100,000 men on foot, . . . and this number is in addition to the main body of troops. . . . When he rides out in peace time with a private

¹¹According to John, the *Terrestrial Paradise*, from which Adam and Eve had been expelled, lies far to the east of Prester John's country; four rivers — the Ganges, Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates — flow out of that paradise and divide the major lands of the Earth.

¹²This particular version of the Prester John myth seems to be a somewhat distorted reflection of the fact that many Mongol khans had Nestorian Christian wives.

¹³Apparently a garbled reference to the Gobi (Gravel) Desert of Central Asia.

entourage, he has borne before him only one wooden cross, unpainted and lacking gold, silver, or gems, as a remembrance that Jesus Christ suffered death on a wooden cross.¹⁴ He also has borne before him a golden platter filled with

earth, in token of the fact that his nobility, might, and flesh will all turn to earth. He also has borne before him a silver vessel full of great nuggets of gold and precious gems, as a token of his lordship, nobility, and might.

¹⁴Keep in mind that *crusade* means "to bear a cross."

A Korean View of the World



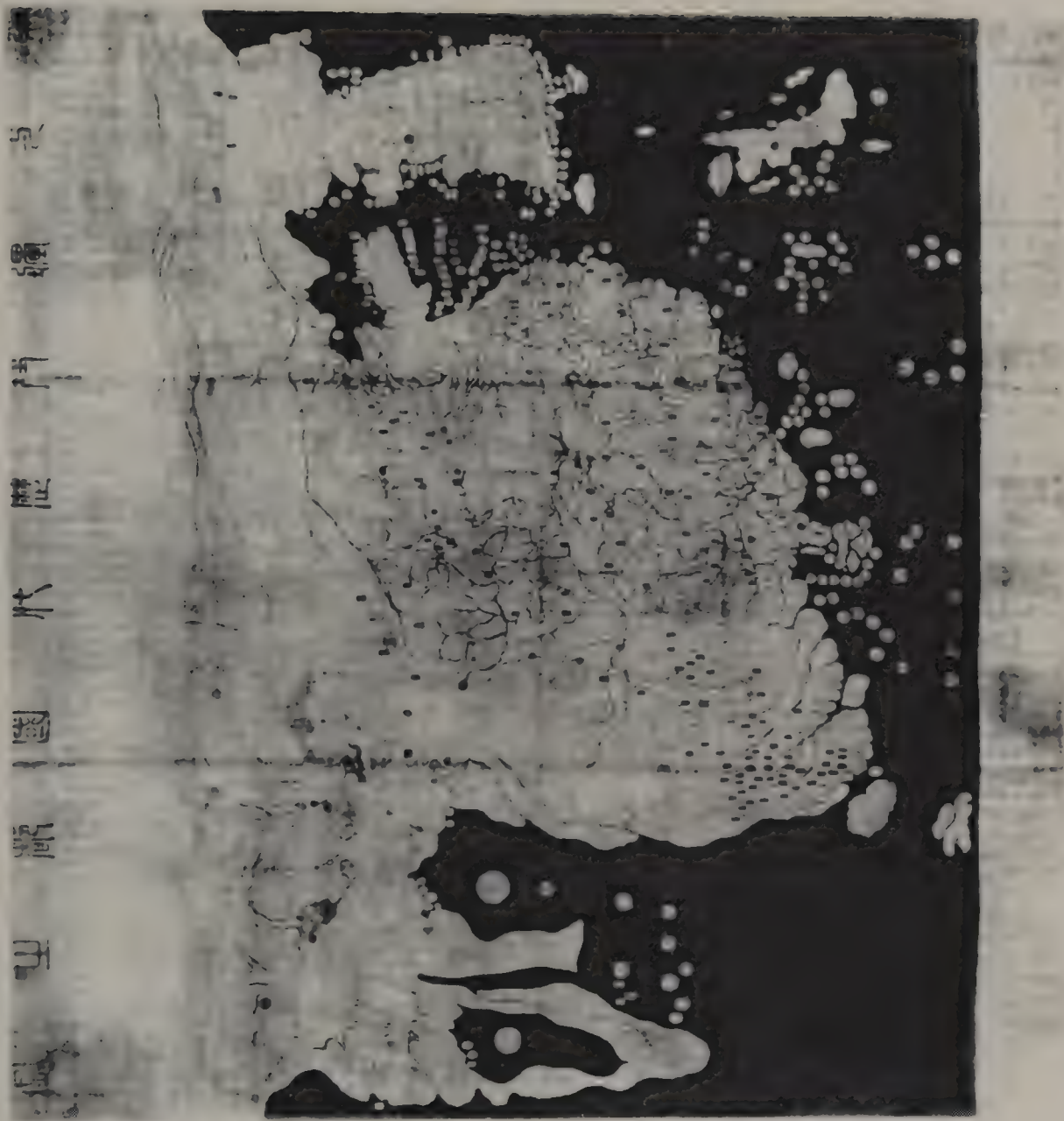
103 ▼ THE KANGNIDO

The most noteworthy world map from the period immediately preceding the European discovery of the Americas comes from Korea. Titled *Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains and of Historical Countries and Capitals*, but known more popularly as the *Kangnido*, the map was produced in 1402, early in the era of the Yi Dynasty (1392–1910), an age of vigorous cultural renewal. The cartographers who created this masterpiece borrowed freely from Chinese, Islamic, and Japanese maps to fashion an integrated map that included almost every known area of the world. Once one has become accustomed to the map's eccentricities, the modern viewer is astounded by its high degree of verisimilitude. To be sure, Japan is located directly south of Korea and farther away than it actually is. This might well represent a statement of supremacy over an age-old enemy by the Yi court. Also the image of Europe leaves much to be desired, but the fact remains, Europe is on the map!

The *Kangnido* was copied many times, so prominent was it to the Yi self-image and program of reform and regeneration. Although the original map is now lost, later fifteenth-century copies are extant. The map that appears here dates from around 1470.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Locate Korea. What does its relative size suggest?
2. Where does the center of the map lie? What does that suggest to you?
3. What have the mapmakers done with China, India, and mainland Southeast Asia? What do you infer from this?
4. Locate the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. What strikes you as particularly significant about these two features? In answering this question address their relative sizes and also the shape of Africa.
5. Locate Europe. Which areas are most recognizable? Which are most vague? What do your answers to these two questions suggest about the sources the Korean cartographers used for the Far West?



The Kangnido

Travel in the Age of the *Pax Mongolica*

Temujin (1167-1227), the Mongol lord who assumed the title *Chinggis* (Ghengis) *Khan* (universal lord) in 1206, believed he had a destiny to rule the world. He and his immediate successors, particularly his grandson *Kubilai* (1214-1294), actually came close to controlling all of Eurasia. Although the Mongols were stopped in Syria, in Southeast Asia, at the borders of India and Arabia, in Eastern Europe, and in the waters off Japan, by 1279 they had still managed to create the largest land empire in history.

Beginning around the time of the rule of Kubilai Khan (r. 1260-1294) and extending for more than a half century after his death, the Mongols ruled over their enormous empire in relative peace and good order. Mongol discipline and organization made it possible to travel between Europe and China with a fair degree of safety and speed. Indeed, large numbers of merchants, ambassadors, fortune seekers, missionaries, and other travelers journeyed in all directions across the Mongol Empire. This steppe landbridge between East Asia and Western Europe was severed after 1350, however, as the Mongol Empire broke up, and the opportunity for normal direct contact between the eastern and western extremities of Eurasia was lost for a century and a half.

Traveling among the Mongols

104 ▼ *William of Rubruck,*

JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE TARTARS

Between 1236 and 1241 Mongol forces under the command of Batu, grandson of Chinggis Khan, overran a number of Christian states in Eastern Europe and even briefly reached the Adriatic Sea. As word of the devastations wrought by the Mongols reached Western Europe, the West's level of anxiety rose appreciably. Although the Mongol westward advance was stopped in 1241 by the sudden death of Ogodei (r. 1229-1241), Chinggis Khan's son and successor as Great Khan, there was no guarantee that the Mongols would not soon resume their assault on European Christendom.

It was in that context that, beginning in 1245, the Roman papacy initiated a series of embassies to various Mongol khans in order to discover their designs regarding Western Europe and to convert them to Catholic Christianity. The hope was that if the Mongols became Christians, they would join the West in crushing Islam in a final, glorious crusade. This double dream of conversion and crusade never became a reality, but it did initiate a century of Roman Catholic relations with the Mongols and involvement by a number of extraordinary Franciscan and Dominican friars in the mission fields of Central and East Asia.

One of the earliest missionary-ambassadors to the Great Khan in East Asia was Brother William of Rubruck, a Franciscan priest. Between May 1253 and June 1255 Friar William traveled from Constantinople to the court of Mongke Khan (r. 1251–1259) at *Karakorum* in Mongolia and returned to the eastern Mediterranean. William's mission failed to convert the Great Khan, but it did result in a report of his adventures and observations while among the Mongols. An exceptionally observant individual, Brother William provides us with one of the most detailed accounts of mid-thirteenth-century Mongol society.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Mongol religion is generally categorized as *shamanistic*. Based on what Rubruck tells us about their religious practices, what do you think this term means?
2. Many people think of nomads as wanderers who aimlessly travel about with their herds. What evidence does Rubruck provide to refute this misconception?
3. Consider the Mongols' attitude toward thunder. Why do you think these people of the steppes so feared it?
4. How would you characterize the status of women relative to men? In addressing this issue, consider the respective tasks of women and men and Mongol marriage customs.
5. On the basis of this account, how would you characterize Mongol society in the mid thirteenth century?
6. Some commentators have argued that Rubruck displays a certain sensitivity toward and even sympathy for the Mongols he encountered. Based on these selections, what do you think? Please be specific in supporting your conclusion.

THE TARTARS¹ AND THEIR DWELLINGS

The Tartars have no abiding city. . . . Each captain, according to whether he has more or fewer men under him, knows the limits of his pasture and where to feed his flocks in winter, summer, spring, and autumn, for in winter they come down to the warmer districts in the south, in summer they go up to the cooler ones in the north. They drive their cattle to graze on the

pasture lands without water in winter when there is snow there, for the snow provides them with water.

The dwelling in which they sleep has as its base a circle of interlaced sticks, and it is made of the same material; these sticks converge into a little circle at the top and from this a neck juts up like a chimney; they cover it with white felt and quite often they also coat the felt with lime or white clay and powdered bone to make it a more gleaming white, and sometimes they make

¹Westerners mistakenly called the Mongols *Tartars*, a corruption of *Tatars*, the name of a tribe of steppe nomads who dwelled near the Mongols. Tartar seems to have been a

deliberate pun. The classical Latin name for Hell was *Tartarus*; hence, the Mongols were the "devil's horsemen."

it black. The felt round the neck at the top they decorate with lovely and varied paintings. Before the doorway they also hang felt worked in multicolored designs; they sew colored felt onto the other, making vines and trees, birds, and animals. They make these houses so large that sometimes they are thirty feet across. . . .

In addition they make squares to the size of a large coffer out of slender split twigs; then over it, from one end to the other, they build up a rounded roof out of similar twigs and they make a little entrance at the front end; after that they cover this box or little house with black felt soaked in tallow or ewes' milk so that it is rain-proof, and this they decorate in the same way with multicolored handwork. Into these chests they put all their bedding and valuables; they bind them onto high carts which are drawn by camels so that they can cross rivers. These chests are never removed from the carts. When they take down their dwelling houses, they always put the door facing the south. . . .

The married women make for themselves really beautiful carts which I would not know how to describe for you except by a picture; in fact I would have done you paintings of everything if I only knew how to paint. A wealthy Mongol or Tartar may well have a hundred or two hundred such carts with chests. Baatu² has twenty-six wives and each of these has a large house, not counting the other small ones which are placed behind the large one and which are, as it were, chambers in which their attendants live; belonging to each of these houses are a good two hundred carts. When they pitch their houses the chief wife places her dwelling at the extreme west end and after her the others according to their rank, so that the last wife will be at the far east end, and there will be the space of a stone's throw between the establishment of one wife and that of another. And so the *orda*³ of a rich Mongol

will look like a large town and yet there will be very few men in it.

One woman will drive twenty or thirty carts, for the country is flat. They tie together the carts, which are drawn by oxen or camels, one after the other, and the woman will sit on the front one driving the ox while all the others follow in step. If they happen to come on a bad bit of track they loose them and lead them across it one by one. They go at a very slow pace, as a sheep or an ox might walk.

When they have pitched their houses with the door facing south, they arrange the master's couch at the northern end. The women's place is always on the east side, that is, on the left of the master of the house when he is sitting on his couch looking toward the south; the men's place is on the west side, that is, to his right.

On entering a house the men would by no means hang up their quiver in the women's section. Over the head of the master there is always an idol like a doll or little image of felt which they call the master's brother, and a similar one over the head of the mistress, and this they call the mistress's brother; they are fastened on to the wall. Higher up between these two is a thin little one which is, as it were, the guardian of the whole house. The mistress of the house places on her right side, at the foot of the couch, in a prominent position, a goatskin stuffed with wool or other material, and next to it a tiny image turned toward her attendants and the women. By the entrance on the women's side is still another idol with a cow's udder for the women who milk the cows, for this is the women's job. On the other side of the door toward the men is another image with a mare's udder for the men who milk the mares. •

When they have foregathered for a drink they first sprinkle with the drink the idol over the master's head, then all the other idols in turn;

²Baatu or Batu (d. 1255/1256), grandson of Chinggis Khan and founder of the Golden Horde, the group of Mongols that conquered and ruled Russia.

³*Orda* is a Turkic word meaning "camp," from which we derive the word *horde*.

after this an attendant goes out of the house with a cup and some drinks; he sprinkles thrice toward the south, genuflecting each time; this is in honor of fire; next toward the east in honor of the air, and after that to the west in honor of water; they cast it to the north for the dead. When the master is holding his cup in his hand and is about to drink, before he does so he first pours some out on the earth as its share. If he drinks while seated on a horse, before he drinks he pours some over the neck or mane of the horse. And so when the attendant has sprinkled toward the four quarters of the earth he returns into the house; two servants with two cups and as many plates are ready to carry the drink to the master and the wife sitting beside him upon his couch. If he has several wives, she with whom he sleeps at night sits next to him during the day, and on that day all the others have to come to her dwelling to drink, and the court is held there, and the gifts which are presented to the master are placed in the treasury of that wife. Standing in the entrance is a bench with a skin of milk or some other drink and some cups.

In the winter they make an excellent drink from rice, millet, wheat, and honey, which is clear like wine. Wine, too, is conveyed to them from distant regions. In the summer they do not bother about anything except cosmos.⁴ Cosmos is always to be found inside the house before the entrance door, and near it stands a musician with his instrument. Our lutes and viols I did not see there but many other instruments such as are not known among us. When the master begins to drink, then one of the attendants cries out in a loud voice "Ha!" and the musician strikes his instrument. And when it is a big feast they are holding, they all clap their hands and also dance to the sound of the instrument, the men before the master and the women before the mistress. After the master has drunk, then the attendant cries out as before and the instrument-player

breaks off. Then they drink all round, the men and the women, and sometimes vie with each other in drinking in a really disgusting and gluttonous manner. . . .

THE FOOD OF THE TARTARS

As for their food and victuals I must tell you they eat all dead animals indiscriminately and with so many flocks and herds you can be sure a great many animals do die. However, in the summer as long as they have any cosmos, that is mare's milk, they do not care about any other food. If during that time an ox or a horse happens to die, they dry the flesh by cutting it into thin strips and hanging it in the sun and the wind, and it dries immediately without salt and without any unpleasant smell. Out of the intestines of horses they make sausages which are better than pork sausages and they eat these fresh; the rest of the meat they keep for the winter. From the hide of oxen they make large jars which they dry in a wonderful way in the smoke. From the hind part of horses' hide they make very nice shoes.

They feed fifty or a hundred men with the flesh of a single sheep, for they cut it up in little bits in a dish with salt and water, making no other sauce; then with the point of a knife or a fork especially made for this purpose — like those with which we are accustomed to eat pears and apples cooked in wine — they offer to each of those standing round one or two mouthfuls, according to the number of guests. Before the flesh of the sheep is served, the master first takes what pleases him; and also if he gives anyone a special portion then the one receiving it has to eat it himself and may give it to no one else. But if he cannot eat it all he may take it away with him or give it to his servant, if he is there, to keep for him; otherwise he may put it away in his *captargac*, that is, a square bag which they carry

⁴More correctly *qumiz*, the Mongols' favorite alcoholic drink, which they derived from mare's milk.

to put all such things in: in this they also keep bones when they have not the time to give them a good gnaw, so that later they may gnaw them and no food be wasted.

THE DUTIES OF THE WOMEN AND THEIR WORK

It is the duty of the women to drive the carts, to load the houses onto them and to unload them, to milk the cows, to make the butter and *grut*,⁵ to dress the skins and to sew them, which they do with thread made out of tendons. They split the tendons into very thin threads and then twist these into one long thread. They also sew shoes and socks and other garments. They never wash their clothes, for they say that that makes God angry and that it would thunder if they hung them out to dry; they even beat those who do wash them and take them away from them. They are extraordinarily afraid of thunder. At such a time they turn all strangers out of their dwellings and wrap themselves in black felt in which they hide until it has passed over. They never wash their dishes, but when the meat is cooked, they wash out the bowl in which they are going to put it with some boiling broth from the cauldron which they afterwards pour back. The women also make the felt and cover the houses.

The men make bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits and make saddles; they build the houses and carts, they look after the horses and milk the mares, churn the cosmos, that is the mares' milk, and make the skins in which it is kept, and they also look after the camels and load them. Both sexes look after the sheep and goats, and sometimes the men, sometimes the

women, milk them. They dress skins with the sour milk of ewes, thickened and salted.

When they want to wash their hands or their head, they fill their mouth with water and, pouring this little by little from their mouth into their hands, with it they wet their hair and wash their head.

As for their marriages, you must know that no one there has a wife unless he buys her, which means that sometimes girls are quite grown up before they marry, for their parents always keep them until they sell them. They observe the first and second degrees of consanguinity,⁶ but observe no degrees of affinity; they have two sisters at the same time or one after the other. No widow among them marries, the reason being that they believe that all those who serve them in this life will serve them in the next, and so of a widow they believe that she will always return after death to her first husband. This gives rise to a shameful custom among them whereby a son sometimes takes to wife all his father's wives, except his own mother; for the *orda* of a father and mother always falls to the youngest son⁷ and so he himself has to provide for all his father's wives who come to him with his father's effects; and then, if he so wishes, he uses them as wives, for he does not consider an injury has been done to him if they return to his father after death.

And so when anyone has made an agreement with another to take his daughter, the father of the girl arranges a feast and she takes flight to relations where she lies hid. Then the father declares: "Now my daughter is yours; take her wherever you find her." Then he searches for her with his friends until he finds her; then he has to take her by force and bring her, as though by violence, to his house.

⁵A sour curd cheese.

⁶Siblings and first cousins are prohibited from marrying one another.

⁷The youngest son of his chief wife.

Traveling the Silk Road



105 ▼ *Marco Polo, DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD*

No chapter on trans-Eurasian travel in the Mongol Age would be complete without a selection from Marco Polo (ca. 1253–1324), a Venetian who spent twenty years in East Asia. A few scholars have questioned whether Marco Polo ever went to China, and some have even wondered whether he ever existed. Their conclusions, largely built on arguments from silence, in which they point to what Polo's account does not mention and to the absence of his name in all known Chinese records (despite his claim to have been in the service of Kubilai Khan), have failed to win widespread support within the academic community. As the issue currently stands, there seems to be no good reason to doubt the basic historicity of Marco Polo's account of his years in China, even though the story, as we have received it, contains undoubted exaggeration and human error — error that was compounded by the manner in which Polo's story was transmitted to posterity.

Around 1260 Marco's father and uncle, Niccoló and Maffeo, both merchants from Venice, set sail for the Black Sea and from there made an overland trek to the court of Kubilai. When they were preparing to return home, the Great Khan requested that they visit the pope and ask him to send one hundred missionary-scholars to Cathay (northern China). The Polos arrived at the crusader port of Acre (in modern Israel) in 1269 and in 1271 received a commission from Pope Gregory X (r. 1271–1276) to return to China with two Dominican friars. The two friars quickly abandoned the expedition, afraid of the dangers that awaited them, but Niccoló's seventeen-year-old son, Marco, was made of sterner stuff. The brothers Polo, now accompanied by young Marco, began the long trek back to northern China and the court of Kubilai, arriving there in 1274 or 1275. Here apparently Marco entered the service of the Great Khan, but it is impossible to say with certainty what offices he held. Whatever the truth about Polo's position, it is clear that for close to two decades he traveled extensively over much of Kubilai's empire, and he probably functioned, at least occasionally, as one of the many foreign officials serving the Mongol, or *Yuan*, Dynasty (1271–1368).

In 1290 or 1292 the three men set sail for the West by way of the Indian Ocean and arrived home in Venice in 1295. In 1298 Marco was captured in a war with Genoa and, while in prison, related his adventures to a writer of romances known as Rustichello of Pisa. Together they produced a rambling, often disjointed account of the sites, peoples, personalities, and events Marco had encountered in Asia.

Despite its literary flaws and a self-puffery that was obvious even to fourteenth-century contemporaries, the book was widely translated and distributed throughout late medieval Europe. Its popularity was due in part to Marco's eye for detail, as the book abounds with stories and descriptions of phenomena that Westerners found fascinatingly different.

In the following selection Polo describes his journey to Cathay along the portion of the Silk Road that skirts the southern fringes of the forbidding *Taklamakan Desert*. The term *Silk Road* conjures up every sort of romantic notion in modern readers, but for the men and women who journeyed along its many routes it was anything but romantic, even though towns along the way did offer pleasures and even exotic experiences. The fact that it took the Polos about three and one-half years to travel from Acre to Shangdu, the summer palace of the Great Khan, suggests how difficult and dangerous the journey was.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What were the dangers for travelers along this portion of the Silk Road?
2. Despite the dangers, what made the journey possible and even bearable?
3. Why did people inhabit towns and cities along this route?
4. What dangers did these urban people encounter?
5. What impact did the Mongols have on this part of the Silk Road?

Let us turn next to the province of Yarkand,¹ five days' journey in extent. The inhabitants follow the law of Mahomet,² and there are also some Nestorian Christians.³ They are subject to the Great Khan's nephew,⁴ of whom I have already spoken. It is amply stocked with the means of life, especially cotton. But, since there is nothing here worth mentioning in our book, we shall pass on to Khotan,⁵ which lies towards the east-north-east.

Khotan is a province eight days' journey in extent, which is subject to the Great Khan. The inhabitants all worship Mahomet. It has cities and towns in plenty, of which the most splendid, and the capital of the kingdom, bears the same name as the province, Khotan. It is amply stocked with the means of life. Cotton grows here in plenty. It has vineyards, estates, and orchards

in plenty. The people live by trade and industry; they are not at all warlike.

Passing on from here we come to the province of Pem, five days' journey in extent, towards the east-north-east. Here too the inhabitants worship Mahomet and are subject to the Great Khan. It has villages and towns in plenty. The most splendid city and the capital of the province is called Pem. There are rivers here in which are found stones called jasper and chalcedony⁶ in plenty. There is no lack of the means of life. Cotton is plentiful. The inhabitants live by trade and industry.

The following custom is prevalent among them. When a woman's husband leaves her to go on a journey of more than twenty days, then, as soon as he has left, she takes another husband, and this she is fully entitled to do by local us-

¹Yarkand is on the southwestern border of the *Taklamakan Desert*, which is located in the Tarim Basin. The *Taklamakan*, whose name means "those who enter never return," cannot support human life. Travelers must decide whether to take the fork that skirts the northern edge of this six-hundred-mile-long wilderness of sand (the Northern Tarim Route) or the southern fork (the Southern Tarim Route). Yarkand is the first major city on the Southern Tarim Route — for those traveling from the west.

²Muhammad. Many Western Christians thought *Mahomet* was a god whom Muslims worshiped (see below).

³Various Turkish tribes had adopted this form of Christianity.

⁴Kaidu.

⁵The next major city along this route.

⁶Two highly valued quartz crystals.

age. And the men, wherever they go, take wives in the same way.

You should know that all the provinces I have described, from Kashgar⁷ to Pem and some way beyond, are provinces of Turkestan.⁸

I will tell you next of another province of Turkestan, lying east-north-east, which is called Charchan. It used to be a splendid and fruitful country, but it has been much devastated by the Tartars.⁹ The inhabitants worship Mahomet. There are villages and towns in plenty, and the chief city of the kingdom is Charchan.¹⁰ There are rivers producing jasper and chalcedony, which are exported for sale in Cathay and bring in a good profit; for they are plentiful and of good quality.

All this province is a tract of sand; and so is the country from Khotan to Pem and from Pem to here. There are many springs of bad and bitter water, though in some places the water is good and sweet. When it happens that an army passes through the country, if it is a hostile one, the people take flight with their wives and children and their beasts two or three days' journey into the sandy wastes to places where they know that there is water and they can live with their beasts. And I assure you that no one can tell which way they have gone, because the wind covers their tracks with sand, so that there is nothing to show where they have been, but the country looks as if it had never been traversed by man or beast. That is how they escape from their enemies. But, if it happens that a friendly army passes that way, they merely drive off their beasts, because they do not want to have them seized and eaten; for the armies never pay for what they take. And you should know that, when they harvest their grain, they store it far from any habitation, in

certain caves among these wastes, for fear of the armies; and from these stores they bring home what they need month by month.

After leaving Charchan, the road runs for fully five days through sandy wastes, where the water is bad and bitter, except in a few places where it is good and sweet; and there is nothing worth noting in our book. At the end of the five days' journey towards the east-north-east, is a city which stands on the verge of the Great Desert. It is here that men take in provisions for crossing the desert. Let us move on accordingly and proceed with our narrative.

The city I have mentioned, which stands at the point where the traveler enters the Great Desert, is a big city called Lop, and the desert is called the Desert of Lop.¹¹ The city is subject to the Great Khan, and the inhabitants worship Mahomet. I can tell you that travelers who intend to cross the desert rest in this town for a week to refresh themselves and their beasts. At the end of the week they stock up with a month's provisions for themselves and their beasts. Then they leave the town and enter the desert.

This desert is reported to be so long that it would take a year to go from end to end; and at the narrowest point it takes a month to cross it. It consists entirely of mountains and sand and valleys. There is nothing at all to eat. But I can tell you that after traveling a day and a night you find drinking water¹² — not enough water to supply a large company, but enough for fifty or a hundred men with their beasts. And all the way through the desert you must go for a day and a night before you find water. And I can tell you that in three or four places you find the water bitter and brackish; but at all the other

⁷Kashgar, on the extreme western end of the Taklamakan, is where the northern and southern forks branch, for those traveling from the west.

⁸The region of Central Asia inhabited by Turkic peoples.

⁹Mongols not Tartars. See source 104, note 1.

¹⁰Known to the Chinese as Shanshan, it was the next significant city along the Southern Tarim Route.

¹¹On the eastern edge of the Taklamakan Desert is a salt-encrusted plain of hard-baked clay known as the Lop Nor (the Salt Sea) — the dried bed of an ancient sea.

¹²Streams from distant mountains, which long ago made this a great inland salt sea, create oases.

watering-places, that is, twenty-eight in all, the water is good. Beasts and birds there are none, because they find nothing to eat. But I assure you that one thing is found here, and that a very strange one, which I will relate to you.

The truth is this. When a man is riding by night through this desert and something happens to make him loiter and lose touch with his companions, by dropping asleep or for some other reason, and afterwards he wants to rejoin them, then he hears spirits talking in such a way that they seem to be his companions. Sometimes, indeed, they even hail him by name. Often these voices make him stray from the path, so that he never finds it again. And in this way many travelers have been lost and have perished. And sometimes in the night they are conscious of a noise like the clatter of a great cavalcade of riders away from the road; and, believing that these are some of their own company, they go where they hear the noise and, when day breaks, find they are victims of an illusion and in an awkward plight. And there are some who, in crossing this desert, have seen a host of men coming towards them and, suspecting that they were robbers, have taken flight; so, having left the beaten track and not knowing how to return to it, they have gone hopelessly astray. Yes, and even by daylight men hear these spirit voices, and often you fancy you are listening to the strains of many instruments, especially drums, and the clash of arms. For this reason bands of travelers make a point of keeping very close together. Before they go to sleep they set up a sign pointing in the direction in which they have to travel. And round the necks of all their beasts they fasten little bells, so that by listening to the sound they may prevent them from straying off the path.

That is how they cross the desert, with all the discomfort of which you have heard. . . .

Now I will tell you of some other cities, which lie towards the north-west near the edge of this desert.¹³

The province of Kamul, which used to be a kingdom, contains towns and villages in plenty, the chief town being also called Kamul.¹⁴ The province lies between two deserts, the Great Desert and a small one three days' journey in extent.¹⁵ The inhabitants are all idolaters¹⁶ and speak a language of their own. They live on the produce of the soil; for they have a superfluity of foodstuffs and beverages, which they sell to travelers who pass that way. They are a very gay folk, who give no thought to anything but making music, singing and dancing, and reading and writing according to their own usage, and taking great delight in the pleasures of the body. I give you my word that if a stranger comes to a house here to seek hospitality he receives a very warm welcome. The host bids his wife do everything that the guest wishes. Then he leaves the house and goes about his own business and stays away two or three days. Meanwhile the guest stays with his wife in the house and does what he will with her, lying with her in one bed just as if she were his own wife; and they lead a gay life together. All the men of this city and province are thus cuckolded by their wives; but they are not the least ashamed of it. And the women are beautiful and vivacious and always ready to oblige.

Now it happened during the reign of Mongu Khan,¹⁷ lord of the Tartars, that he was informed of this custom that prevailed among the men of Kamul of giving their wives in adultery to outsiders. Mongu thereupon commanded them under heavy penalties to desist from this form of hospitality. When they received this command, they were greatly distressed; but for three years

¹³Polo now shifts to the Northern Tarim Route. He does not claim that Kamul and the other cities that he describes in this aside were on his route eastward. Indeed, the whole tone of this section suggests he heard about these sites during his stay in China.

¹⁴The modern city of Hami.

¹⁵This smaller desert has to be the edge of the Gobi Desert, which is not a small desert and is not crossed in three days.

¹⁶Buddhists.

¹⁷Kublai's older brother and Great Khan from 1251 to 1259.

they reluctantly obeyed. Then they held a council and talked the matter over, and this is what they did. They took a rich gift and sent it to Mongu and entreated him to let them use their wives according to the traditions of their ancestors; for their ancestors had declared that by the pleasure they gave to guests with their wives and

goods they won the favor of their idols and multiplied the yield of their crops and their tillage. When Mongu Khan heard this he said: 'Since you desire your own shame, you may have it.' So he let them have their way. And I can assure you that since then they have always upheld this tradition and uphold it still.

A European Missionary Travels to China



106 ▼ *John of Monte Corvino, LETTER TO THE WEST*

Despite disappointment at the Mongols' reception of their early embassies to the Great Khan and his lieutenants, popes and kings in the West did not abandon hope of converting the Mongols to Roman Christianity and allying with them against Islam. On their part, various Mongol khans continued to flirt with the idea of joining with European Christian powers against a common Muslim foe.

In 1287 Arghun, *il-khan* of Persia (r. 1284–1291), a nephew and subordinate of the Great Khan Kubilai, sent a Nestorian Christian monk, *Rabban* (Master) *Sauma*, to the West bearing letters for the pope, the kings of France and England, and the emperor of Constantinople, in which the Mongol prince offered to become a Christian in return for an alliance against a common enemy, the Muslim Mamluks of Egypt. The Mamluks had rolled back a Mongol invasion of Syria-Palestine with a decisive victory at 'Ayn Jalut in 1260, and they were on the threshold of capturing the last of the crusader strongholds in that same region. Arghun died before he or anyone else could act on the proposal, and in 1295 his successor embraced Islam, thereby ending any hope of a Mongol-European crusade in the Holy Land. Arghun's overtures, however, set in motion a remarkable adventure for one European missionary.

In response to Rabban Sauma's appearance in Rome in 1289, Pope Nicholas IV dispatched a Franciscan friar, John of Monte Corvino (1247–ca. 1328), to the Mongols with letters for Arghun and other khans farther to the east, including the khan of khans, Kubilai. Friar John had only just returned to Rome after having served as a missionary in Armenia and Mongol-controlled Persia between about 1280 and 1289. Apparently his report so impressed Pope Nicholas that the pope ordered John to return immediately to West Asia and from there to travel to the Great Khan in northern China.

In 1291 John was in Tauris (modern Tabriz), Arghun's capital, but the *il-khan* died in March of that year, and between May and July of the same year the last crusader strongholds in the Holy Land fell to Islamic forces. With nothing further to be accomplished in Persia, John set out for the court of the Great Khan in China. Civil war among the Mongols delayed Friar John's journey across Central Asia and resulted in a detour to India, from where Friar John sent back to Rome a detailed report on India's native Christian communities. Due to this delay, John arrived at the Mongol capital of Khanbalik (modern Beijing) in 1294/1295, right

around or just after Kubilai's death. Making the best of his situation, John remained in China as a missionary.

In the course of his long stay in China, Friar John wrote two letters to fellow Franciscans who were working as missionaries in the area of the Black Sea, in which he informed them of his experiences in China. The letters were forwarded to Rome. In response, Pope Clement V appointed John archbishop of Khanbalik in 1307 and dispatched several assistant missionaries to serve as his subordinate bishops. The new archbishop remained at his post until his death around 1328, and Pope Benedict XII subsequently sent a replacement. Notwithstanding this effort, the Roman Catholic mission in China barely limped along. When the Mongols finally were expelled from China in 1368, European missionary activity in China ended and would not be revived until the coming of the Jesuits in the sixteenth century.

The following document is the first letter that Friar John sent from China. In it he relates his success working with the late King Kerguz, or George, leader of the Ongut Turks and the Great Khan's son-in-law.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What problems did Friar John encounter?
2. How was Friar John able to gain most of his converts, and from which group(s) does he seem to have won most of his converts, the Turkic Nestorian Christians, the non-Christian Mongols, or the Chinese? What do you conclude from your answers?
3. What picture does John draw of the Mongol Empire? How, if at all, has it changed since the days of Friar William of Rubruck (source 104)?
4. How easy or difficult was it to reach China from the West at the end of the thirteenth century? Be specific in your answer.
5. What does this letter allow us to infer about European-Chinese contacts during this period?
6. What does John's letter suggest about Mongol attitudes and policy toward Christians at the end of the thirteenth century?

I, Friar John of Monte Corvino, of the Order of Friars Minor,¹ departed from Tauris, a city of the Persians, in the year of the Lord 1291, and proceeded to India. And I remained in the country of India, wherein stands the church of St. Thomas the Apostle,² for thirteen months, and in

that region baptized in different places about one hundred persons. The companion of my journey was Friar Nicholas of Pistoia, of the Order of Preachers,³ who died there, and was buried in the aforesaid church.

I proceeded on my further journey and made

¹Friars Minor, or Lesser Brothers, was the official title of the Franciscan Order.

²According to tradition, Saint Thomas the Apostle had established a small Christian community on India's western coast in the late first century. Whatever the truth of that legend, Persian Nestorian Christians had established a well-

organized Church in western India by the mid sixth century.

³Like the Friars Minor, members of the Order of Preachers (more popularly known as *Dominicans*) were *mendicant* (begging) friars. The Dominicans and the Franciscans equally served as the Church's most active missionary orders since their inception in the early thirteenth century.

my way to Cathay, the realm of the emperor of the Tatars⁴ who is called the Grand Khan.⁵ To him I presented the letter of our lord the pope, and invited him to adopt the Catholic faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, but he had grown too old in idolatry. However he bestows many kindnesses upon the Christians, and these two years past I am abiding with him.

The Nestorians, a certain body who profess to bear the Christian name, but who deviate sadly from the Christian religion, have grown so powerful in those parts that they will not allow a Christian of another ritual to have ever so small a chapel, or to publish any doctrine different from their own.⁶

To these regions there never came anyone of the apostles, nor yet of the disciples.⁷ And so the aforesaid Nestorians, either directly or through others whom they bribed, have brought on me the sharpest of persecutions. For they got up stories that I was not sent by our lord the pope, but was a great spy and impostor; and after a while they produced false witnesses who declared that there was indeed an envoy sent with presents of immense value for the emperor, but that I had murdered him in India and stolen what he had in charge. And these intrigues and calumnies went on for some five years. And thus it came to pass that many a time I was dragged before the judgment seat with ignominy and threats of death. At last, by God's providence, the emperor, through the confessions of a certain individual, came to know my innocence and the malice of my adversaries; and he banished them with their wives and children.

In this mission I abode alone and without any associate for eleven years, but it is now going on

for two years since I was joined by Friar Arnold, a German of the province of Cologne.⁸

I have built a church in the city of Khanbaliq, in which the king has his chief residence. This I completed six years ago; and I have built a belltower to it, and put three bells in it. I have baptized there, as well as I can estimate, up to this time some 6,000 persons; and if those charges against me of which I have spoken had not been made, I should have baptized more than 30,000. And I am often still engaged in baptizing.

Also I have gradually bought one hundred and fifty boys, the children of pagan parents, and of ages varying from seven to eleven, who had never learned any religion. These boys I have baptized, and I have taught them Greek and Latin after our manner. Also I have written out psalters for them, with thirty hymnaries and two breviaries.⁹ By help of these, eleven of the boys already know our service, and form a choir and take their weekly turn of duty as they do in convents,¹⁰ whether I am there or not. Many of the boys are also employed in writing out psalters¹¹ and other things suitable. His Majesty the emperor moreover delights much to hear them chanting. I have the bells rung at all the canonical hours,¹² and with my congregation of babes and sucklings I perform divine service,¹³ and the chanting we do by ear because I have no service book with the notes.

A certain king of this part of the world, by name George, belonging to the sect of Nestorian Christians, and of the illustrious family of that great king who was called Prester John of India,¹⁴ in the first year of my arrival here attached himself to me, and being converted by me to the

⁴Mongols not Tatars. See source 104, note 1.

⁵Timur Khan (r. 1294–1307).

⁶For a description of the Nestorian Christian Church, see Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 69. See also note 18 in the current source.

⁷In other words, Christianity was not introduced into China until after the Apostolic Age of the first and second centuries C.E.

⁸He dated the thirteen-year mission from 1291. See the letter's date.

⁹Various prayer books.

¹⁰In *convents*, or houses where friars reside, in the West.

¹¹Books of psalms, or songs, for use in church.

¹²The seven periods of prayer and reflection that mark the passing of each day.

¹³The *Mass* and other liturgical ceremonies. See note 16.

¹⁴When Europeans at this time used the term *India* or *the Indies*, they usually meant *Farther Asia* and did not specifically refer to the Indian subcontinent. Regarding *Prester John*, see source 102.

truth of the Catholic faith, took the lesser orders,¹⁵ and when I celebrated mass¹⁶ he used to attend me wearing his royal robes. Certain others of the Nestorians on this account accused him of apostasy, but he brought over a great part of his people with him to the true Catholic faith, and built a church on a scale of royal magnificence in honor of our God, of the Holy Trinity,¹⁷ and of our lord the pope, giving it the name of the *Roman Church*.

This King George six years ago departed to the Lord a true Christian, leaving as his heir a son scarcely out of the cradle, and who is now nine years old. And after King George's death his brothers, perfidious followers of the errors of Nestorius,¹⁸ perverted again all those whom he had brought over to the church, and carried them back to their original schismatical creed.¹⁹ And being all alone, and not able to leave his Majesty the khan, I could not go to visit the above-mentioned church, which is twenty days' journey distant.

Yet, if I could but get some good fellow-workers to help me, I trust in God that all this might be retrieved, for I still possess the grant which was made in our favor by the late King George before mentioned. So I say again that if it had not been for the slanderous charges which I have spoken of, the harvest reaped by this time would have been great!

Indeed if I had had but two or three comrades to aid me 'tis possible that the emperor khan would have been baptized by this time! I ask then for such brethren to come, if any are willing to come, such I mean as will make it their great business to lead exemplary lives. . . .

As for the road here I may tell you that the way through the land of the Goths²⁰ subject to the emperor of the Northern Tatars, is the shortest and safest; and by it the friars might come, along with the letter-carriers, in five or six months. The other route again is very long and very dangerous, involving two sea-voyages; the first of which is about as long as that from Acre to the province of Provence,²¹ while the second is as long as from Acre to England. And it is possible that it might take more than two years to accomplish the journey that way.²² But, on the other hand, the first-mentioned route has not been open for a considerable time, on account of wars that have been going on.

It is twelve years since I have had any news of the papal court, or of our order, or of the state of affairs generally in the West. Two years ago indeed there came hither a certain Lombard²³ . . . surgeon, who spread abroad in these parts the most incredible blasphemies about the court of Rome and our order²⁴ and the state of things in the West, and on this account I exceedingly desire to obtain true intelligence. I pray

¹⁵The Roman Church recognizes seven clerical orders, or grades. King George was admitted to the four minor clerical orders below those of priest, deacon, and subdeacon.

¹⁶The Mass is Catholic Christianity's central religious ceremony. Here the Eucharist is consecrated and consumed in commemoration of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

¹⁷Christians believe that God is three coeternal, coequal, distinct, and separate divine persons in one indivisible divine essence: God the Father, the Creator; God the Son, the Redeemer (who became the fully human and fully divine Jesus of Nazareth); and God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Illuminator, who dispenses grace and divine wisdom to God's people.

¹⁸An early fifth-century patriarch of Constantinople who was deposed in 431. The so-called errors of Nestorius and his followers revolved around their desire to draw a clear distinction between the divine and human natures of Jesus (see note 17). Consequently, they rejected the Byzantine

and Roman practice of referring to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as *Theotokos* (the Mother of God).

¹⁹Those in *schism* are separated from the Church; a *creed* is a body of religious beliefs (from the Latin *credo* — I believe).

²⁰He probably means the Alans — Christian Iranians who dwelt on the northern shores of the Black Sea. Undoubtedly, he is telling them to take the overland route across the steppes.

²¹From Israel to Mediterranean France. Acre was a major crusader port, which fell to the Mamluks in May 1291.

²²The sea route would involve sailing down either the Red Sea or, more likely, the Persian Gulf into the Indian Ocean and from there proceeding across to India, then to Southeast Asia, and finally northward to a southern Chinese port.

²³Lombardy is a region of north-central Italy.

²⁴There was a bitter conflict between Pope Boniface VIII and a radical, splinter sect known as the Spiritual Franciscans.

the brethren whom this letter may reach to do their possible to bring its contents to the knowledge of our lord the pope and the cardinals,²⁵ and the agents of the order at the court of Rome. . . .

I have myself grown old and grey, more with toil and trouble than with years; for I am not more than fifty-eight. I have got a competent knowledge of the language and character which is most generally used by the Tatars. And I have already translated into that language and character the New Testament and the psalter, and have caused them to be written out in the fairest penmanship they have; and so by writing, reading, and preaching, I bear open and public testimony to the Law of Christ. And I had been in treaty with the late King George, if he had lived, to translate the whole Latin ritual, that it might

be sung throughout the whole extent of his territory; and while he was alive I used to celebrate mass in his church, according to the Latin ritual, reading in the before-mentioned language and character the words of both the preface and the canon.²⁶

And the son of the king before-mentioned is called after my name, John; and I hope in God that he will walk in his father's steps.

As far as I ever saw or heard tell, I do not believe that any king or prince in the world can be compared to his majesty the khan in respect of the extent of his dominions, the vastness of their population, or the amount of his wealth. Here I stop.

Dated at the city of Khanbaliq in the kingdom of Cathay, in the year of the Lord 1305, and on the 8th day of January.

²⁵Cardinals are the chief officials of papal government.

²⁶The preface of the Mass (note 16) is a series of opening prayers; the *canon*, or core, of the Mass consists of the three central acts of the eucharistic service: offertory, consecra-

tion, and communion. In other words, Friar John celebrated the Roman-rite Mass in the language of King George's people.

A Chinese Traveler among the Khmer



107 ▼ Zhou Daguan, RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CUSTOMS OF CAMBODIA

The Yuan emperors of China used foreign-born officials, such as Marco Polo, because of the high degree of mutual distrust and antipathy that existed between the old Confucian governing class and their new Mongol lords, but many Chinese did serve the Mongols faithfully. Among them was Zhou Daguan (d. after 1346), who spent nearly a year in the Khmer Kingdom of Cambodia as a high-ranking member of an embassy sent by Kubilai Khan to secure the Cambodians' recognition of his overlordship.

When the successful legation returned home in 1297, Zhou Daguan set down his impressions of this land and its people. Although he modestly noted that, "It goes without saying that the customs and the activities of the country cannot be completely known in so short a time," he was able to provide posterity with the single best contemporary account of Khmer society at the height of its cultural brilliance. In the following selections Zhou describes the land's cultural divisions, its economic activities, and the ceremony that attended the Khmer king.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Zhou, what kinds of hill people inhabited the regions outside of Cambodia's centers of civilization, and what was their relationship with town and village dwellers?
2. What other divisions existed within Khmer society?
3. What sort of market economy did Cambodia have? What were its major items of export and import? How would you characterize its trade with China?
4. From Zhou's perspective, why did Cambodia seem so "barbarous and strange"?
5. What does the evidence allow you to infer about Cambodia's overall relations with China?
6. Based on Zhou's description of royal ceremony, how would you characterize Khmer kingship?
7. Overall, what picture emerges of late-thirteenth-century Cambodia from these selections?

THE SAVAGES

There are two kinds of savages: those who know the language and are sold as slaves; the other are those who do not understand the language and could not adapt themselves to civilization. The latter have no permanent dwelling places, but, followed by their families, wander in the mountains carrying their few provisions in clay jars on their heads. If they find a wild animal, they will kill it with spears or bows and arrows, make a fire by striking stones together, cook the animal, eat it in common, and continue their wandering. Ferocious by nature, they use deadly poisons. Within their own band, they often kill one another. In recent times a few have started cultivating cardamom and cotton and weaving a cloth that is coarse and irregularly patterned.

SLAVES

Savages are brought to do the work of servants. When they are young and strong, they fetch a hundred pieces of cloth; old and weak, from thirty to forty. Wealthy families may have more

than a hundred; even those of modest means have ten or twenty; only the poor have none at all. The savages inhabit the wild mountains and belong to a different race; they are called *zhuangs*, thieves. If, in a quarrel, a man calls another a *zhuang*, it is a deadly insult, so despised are the savages, who are considered to be subhuman. Brought to the city, they never dare appear on the street. They are forced to live in the space under the houses which are built on stilts and when they come up into the house to do their work, they must first kneel and make the proper obeisance, prostrating themselves before they can advance. They call their owners "father" and "mother." If they make a mistake, they are beaten. They take their punishment with bent head and without making the slightest movement.

THE LANGUAGE

This country has its own language. Even though the sounds are fairly similar, the people of Champa¹ and of Siam² do not understand it. . . .

¹Central Vietnam.

²Thailand.

The officials have an official style for their deliberations; the scholars³ speak in a literary manner; the Buddhist monks and Daoist priests⁴ have their own language; and different villages speak differently. It is absolutely the same as in China.

PRODUCTS

Many strange trees are found in the mountains and in the clearings, herds of rhinoceros and elephants live, rare birds and many unusual animals are to be found. The most precious articles are the feathers of the kingfisher (valued in Canton to ornament gold jewelry), ivory, rhinoceros horn, and beeswax; cardamom and other forest products are more common.

The kingfisher is quite difficult to catch. In the thick woods are ponds and in the ponds are fish. The kingfisher leaves the forest to catch fish. Hidden under the leaves, by the side of the water, the Cambodian crouches. In a cage he has a female bird to attract the male and in his hand a small net. He waits until the bird comes and then catches him in his net. Some days he can catch as many as five; other days he waits vainly for a kingfisher.

Ivory is collected by the hill people. From a dead elephant one secures two tusks. Formerly it was thought that the elephant shed his tusks every year; this is not true. The ivory taken from an animal killed by a spear is the best. Then comes that which is found shortly after the animal has died a natural death; the least valued is that which is found in the mountains years after the death of the elephant.

Beeswax is found in rotted trees standing in the villages. It is produced by winged insects that have thin antlike waists. The Cambodians take it away from the insects; a boatload can carry from two to three thousand honeycombs.

Rhinoceros horn that is white and veined is the most valued; the black variety is of inferior quality.

Cardamom is cultivated in the mountains by the savages. Pepper is also found occasionally. It climbs up bushes and entwines itself like a common weed. The green-blue variety is the most bitter.

TRADE

In Cambodia, women attend to trade. Even a Chinese who arrives there and takes a woman will profit greatly from her trading abilities. They do not have permanent stores, but simply spread a piece of mat on the ground. Everyone has her own spot. I have heard that they pay an official for the right to a location. In small transactions, one pays in rice, grain, Chinese goods, and, lastly, fabrics; in large transactions they use gold and silver.

In a general way, the country people are very naive. When they see a Chinese, they address him timidly, respectfully, calling him Fo — Buddha. As soon as they catch sight of him, they throw themselves on the ground and prostrate themselves. Lately some of them have cheated the Chinese and harmed them. This has happened to numbers of those who have gone into the villages.

CHINESE MERCHANDISE DESIRED IN CAMBODIA

I do not think that Cambodia produces either gold or silver; and what the Cambodians value most is Chinese silver and gold, then silks, lightly patterned in two-toned threads. After these items comes the pewter of Zhenzhou, lacquerware from Wenzhou, the blue porcelain of Quanzhou, mercury, vermilion, paper, sulphur, saltpeter, sandalwood, irisroot, musk, hemp cloth, umbrellas, iron pots, copper platters, sieves, wood combs, and needles. That which they desire most of all is beans and wheat — but their exportation is forbidden.

³These so-called scholars were probably Brahmin priests.

⁴Probably priests of Shiva and not Daoists.

THE ARMY

The troops go naked and barefoot. They hold a lance in their right hand and a shield in their left. The Cambodians have neither bows nor arrows, war machines nor bullets, helmets nor armor. It is said that in the war against the Siamese everyone was obliged to fight, but they had no knowledge of tactics or strategy.

THE PRINCE'S APPEARANCES
IN PUBLIC

When the king leaves the palace, first comes the cavalry, leading his escort, followed by an array of standards, banners, and music. Next comes a troupe of palace girls, anywhere from three to five hundred, dressed in flowered material, their heads garlanded with flowers and holding large candles lighted even in broad daylight. After them come more palace girls bearing the royal utensils of gold and silver and an assortment of all kinds of ornaments whose usage I don't understand. Then come the palace girls who, armed with lance and shield, form the king's private bodyguard; they, too, form a troupe. They are followed by carriages ornamented in gold and drawn by goats and horses. Ministers and nobles mounted on elephants look straight ahead, while clustered around them are their many, many red parasols of rank. After them in palanquins, car-

riages, and on elephants come the king's wives and concubines; they have more than a hundred parasols decorated in gold. Behind them comes the king. Holding the precious sword, he stands on the royal elephant, whose tusks are encased in gold. More than twenty white parasols, gold-trimmed and with golden handles, surround him. A great many elephants form a cordon around the king and the cavalry guards him. . . .

Twice each day the king holds an audience to conduct the affairs of government. There is no set procedure. Whoever desires to see the king — either officials or any private person — sits on the ground and awaits him. After a little while, one hears, far off in the palace, distant music; outside they blow on conchs to announce his approach. I have heard that he uses only a gold palanquin and does not come from very far away. An instant later, two palace girls lift the curtain on the Golden Window and the king, sword in his hand, appears. All those present — ministers and people — clasp their hands together and beat their foreheads on the ground. As the sound of the conchs ceases, they can raise their heads. At the king's pleasure, they may approach and sit down on a lion skin, which is considered a royal object. When all matters are disposed of, the king retires, the two palace girls let the curtain fall; everyone rises. Thus one sees that, though this country is barbarous and strange, they do not fail to know what it is to be a king.

Advice for Merchants Traveling to Cathay



108 ▼ *Francesco Pegolotti,*

THE PRACTICE OF COMMERCE

Around 1340 Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, an otherwise unknown agent of the Bardi banking house of Florence, composed a handbook of practical advice for merchants. Pegolotti, who had served the Bardi family's interests from London to Cyprus, drew upon his years of mercantile experience to produce a work filled with lists of facts and figures on such items as local business customs, the taxes and tariffs of various localities, and the relative values of different standards of

weights, measures, and coinage. In other words, the book contained just about everything a prudent merchant would want to know before entering a new market. In addition to these catalogues of useful data, Pegolotti included a short essay of advice for merchants bound for China.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What evidence is there that Pegolotti himself had not traveled to Cathay?
2. Considering that his advice is not based on firsthand experience, how knowledgeable does he appear to be on the subject, and what does this suggest?
3. Consider Pegolotti's advice regarding the types of interpreters the merchant will need. What language skills suffice to carry on this trans-Eurasian business enterprise? What does this suggest about the markets of northern China?
4. When and where could the trip be especially hazardous? What does this suggest about the *Pax Mongolica*?
5. What overall impression does Pegolotti give us of this journey and its rewards?

THINGS NEEDFUL FOR MERCHANTS WHO DESIRE TO MAKE THE JOURNEY TO CATHAY

In the first place, you must let your beard grow long and not shave. And at Tana¹ you should furnish yourself with a dragoman.² And you must not try to save money in the matter of dragomen by taking a bad one instead of a good one. For the additional wages of the good one will not cost you so much as you will save by having him. And besides the dragoman it will be well to take at least two good menservants, who are acquainted with the Cumanian³ tongue. And if the merchant likes to take a woman with him from Tana, he can do so; if he does not like to take one there is no obligation, only if he does take one he will be kept much more comfortably than if he does not take one. Howbeit, if he does take

one, it will be well that she be acquainted with the Cumanian tongue as well as the men.

And from Tana traveling to Gittarchan⁴ you should take with you twenty-five days' provisions, that is to say, flour and salt fish, for as to meat you will find enough of it at all the places along the road. And so also at all the chief stations noted in going from one country to another in the route, according to the number of days set down above, you should furnish yourself with flour and salt fish; other things you will find in sufficiency, and especially meat.

The road you travel from Tana to Cathay is perfectly safe, whether by day or by night, according to what the merchants say who have used it. Only if the merchant, in going or coming, should die upon the road, everything belonging to him will become the perquisite of the lord of the country in which he dies, and the officers of

¹The modern city of Azov on the northeast coast of the Sea of Azov, which itself is an extension of the Black Sea. Tana was the farthest eastern point to which a person could sail from the Mediterranean.

²An interpreter fluent in Arabic, Persian, or Turkish.

³A Turkic people inhabiting the middle Volga.

⁴Modern Astrakhan, a city in the Volga Delta, just north of the Caspian Sea.

the lord will take possession of all. And in like manner if he die in Cathay. But if his brother be with him, or an intimate friend and comrade calling himself his brother, then to such a one they will surrender the property of the deceased, and so it will be rescued.

And there is another danger: this is when the lord of the country dies, and before the new lord who is to have the lordship is proclaimed; during such intervals there have sometimes been irregularities practiced on the Franks, and other foreigners. (They call "Franks" all the Christians of these parts from Romania⁵ westward.) And neither will the roads be safe to travel until the other lord be proclaimed who is to reign in place of him who is deceased.

Cathay is a province which contains a multitude of cities and towns. Among others there is one in particular, that is to say the capital city, to which merchants flock, and in which there is a vast amount of trade; and this city is called Cambalec.⁶ And the said city has a circuit of one hundred miles, and is all full of people and houses and of dwellers in the said city. . . .

You may reckon also that from Tana to Sara⁷ the road is less safe than on any other part of the journey; and yet even when this part of the road is at its worst, if you are some sixty men in the company you will go as safely as if you were in your own house.

Anyone from Genoa or from Venice, wishing to go to the places above-named, and to make the journey to Cathay, should carry linens with him, and if he visit Organci⁸ he will dispose of these well. In Organci he should purchase *sommi* of silver,⁹ and with these he should proceed without making any further investment, unless it be some bales of the very finest stuffs which go in small bulk, and cost no more for carriage than coarser stuffs would do.

Merchants who travel this road can ride on horseback or on asses, or mounted in any way that they choose to be mounted.

Whatever silver the merchants may carry with them as far as Cathay the lord of Cathay will take from them and put into his treasury. And to merchants who thus bring silver they give that paper money of theirs in exchange. This is of yellow paper, stamped with the seal of the lord aforesaid. And this money is called *balishi*; and with this money you can readily buy silk and all other merchandise that you have a desire to buy. And all the people of the country are bound to receive it. And yet you shall not pay a higher price for your goods because your money is of paper. And of the said paper money there are three kinds, one being worth more than another, according to the value which has been established for each by that lord.

⁵The European term for the Byzantine Empire.

⁶Khanbalik (City of the Khan), modern Beijing.

⁷Sarai on the Volga, the capital of the il-khans of Kipchak (also known as the *Golden Horde*), who ruled Russia and Kazakhstan.

⁸Urgench on the Oxus River in Central Asia.

⁹*Sommi* were weights of silver. Each *sommo* was equivalent to

five golden florins, the standard coin of Florence. Pegolotti calculated that the average merchant would carry merchandise worth about twenty-five thousand florins, and the expenses for the merchant, interpreter, and two personal servants would amount to a combined sixty to eighty *sommi* or three to four hundred florins.

Travel Beyond the Mongol Ecumene

Important as the Mongol Peace was in facilitating movement and trade across Eurasia, it was not the sole factor behind the general upsurge of long-distance travel and cultural exchange after 1000. Religious motives and ties were equally important driving factors, and this was especially true for the ecumenical community that called itself *Dar al-Islam* (The House of Islam). Educated Muslims, no matter their ethnic origins or native tongues, shared a sacred language — Arabic — and could communicate with one another. They also shared the obligation of *hajj* (if at all possible). The pilgrimage routes that enabled African, Spanish, Iranian, Indian, and East Asian Muslims to travel to Arabia's holy sites equally served as important avenues of cultural and material exchange. Moreover, merchants and scholars spread Islam to such faraway regions as sub-Saharan Africa and the coastal lands of Southeast Asia. Once the faith had taken root, there was even more reason to maintain contact with these societies, many of which were so distant from Islam's Southwest Asian birthplace.

The breakup of the Mongol Empire around the middle of the fourteenth century also did not end long-distance travel for the non-Islamic peoples of Eurasia. China and Western Europe had taken to the seas long before the rise of Chinggis Khan and continued their interests in seafaring and naval technology throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and beyond. Early in the fifteenth century Ming China sent seven massive naval expeditions into the Indian Ocean, and portions of several of those fleets reached the shores of East Africa and Arabia. Also in the fifteenth century, Western Europe, finding the overland roads to Cathay now mostly blocked, began to seek sea routes to the Indies. The consequences of those explorations were astounding. Before the century was over Europeans had sailed to East Africa, India, and the Americas.

A Moroccan Visitor in Sub-Saharan Africa

109 ▼ *Ibn Battuta,*

A DONATION TO THOSE INTERESTED IN CURIOSITIES

The life and world travels of Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Battuta (1304–1369) provide eloquent testimony to the cosmopolitanism of fourteenth-century Islam. Ibn Battuta was born into the religious upper class of Tangier, Morocco, where he received an education in Islamic law and Arabic literature. In 1325 he left home to make the first of what would be several pilgrimages to Mecca. In the course of the next three decades he visited Constantinople, Mesopotamia, Persia, India (where he resided and worked as a *qadi*, or religious judge, for eight years),

Burma, Sumatra, Spain, Mali, and probably southern China. In all, his travels covered about seventy-three thousand miles, and most of his stops along the way were within the cultural confines of *Dar al-Islam*, where the sacred law of the Qur'an prevailed.

In 1351 Ibn Battuta returned to Morocco, but one more journey awaited him. In February 1352 he joined a camel caravan of merchants as he embarked on his last great adventure — a trip to the West African kingdom of Mali, which lay some fifteen hundred miles to the south of Morocco across one of the world's most inhospitable deserts. Two years later he arrived back home with marvelous tales to tell of this Malinke-speaking land of gold, whose leaders had converted to Islam in the early thirteenth century.

His days of long-distance travel now over, Ibn Battuta narrated his many travel experiences and observations to Ibn Juzayy, a professional scribe who fashioned these stories into one of the most popular forms of literature in the Islamic World: a *rihla*, or book of travels centering on the *hajj* to Mecca.

The following selection does not describe any of Ibn Battuta's several pilgrimages to Mecca; rather, it tells of his last great journey into the kingdom of Mali in West Africa's Niger River region.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What did Ibn Battuta admire most about these people? What did he find hardest to accept? Why?
2. Did Ibn Battuta understand fully all he encountered? Can you find any evidence of tension or misunderstanding?
3. In what ways were the cultures of the people whom Ibn Battuta encountered a mixture of indigenous West African and Islamic elements?
4. How organized and controlled does the state of Mali appear to be?
5. Compare fourteenth-century Mali with eleventh-century Ghana (Chapter 1, source 94). What are their similarities and differences? Which seem more significant? What do you conclude from that answer?
6. Based on a careful study of sources 94 and 96 of Chapter 1, as well as of this document, what inferences do you draw about the social status of women in sub-Saharan West Africa?

Then we reached the town of Iwalatan . . . after a journey . . . of two whole months. It is the first district of the Sudan and the sultan's¹ deputy there is Farba Husayn. *Farba* means "deputy." When we arrived there the merchants² placed their belongings in an open space, where the

Sudan³ took over the guard of them while they went to the *farba*. He was sitting on a carpet under a *saqif*⁴ with his assistants in front of him with lances and bows in their hands and the chief men of the Masufa⁵ behind him. The merchants stood before him while he addressed them, in

¹The sultan, or king, of Mali, for whom this was an outlying province.

²Berbers and Arabs from North Africa.

³Here this Arabic word, which means "blacks," refers to the local people and not to the region.

⁴A colonnade.

⁵A Berber people of the western Sahara.

spite of their proximity to him, through an interpreter, out of contempt for them. At this I repented at having come to their country because of their ill manners and their contempt for white men.⁶ I made for the house of Ibn Badda', a respectable man of Sala to whom I had written to rent a house for me. He had done so. Then the *musbrif*⁷ (of Iwalatan), who is called the *manshaju*, invited those who had come with the caravan to receive his reception-gift (*diyafa*). I declined to go but my companions entreated me urgently, so I went with those who went. Then the *diyafa* was brought. It was *anili*⁸ meal mixed with a little honey and yogurt which they had placed in half a gourd made into a kind of bowl. Those present drank and went away. I said to them: "Was it to this that the black man invited us?" They said: "Yes, for them this is a great banquet." Then I knew for certain that no good was to be expected from them and I wished to depart with the pilgrims of Iwalatan. But then I thought it better to go to see the seat of their king.

My stay in Iwalatan lasted about fifty days. Its inhabitants did me honor and made me their guest. Among them was the qadi⁹ of the place Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Yanumur and his brother the faqih¹⁰ and teacher Yahya. The town of Iwalatan is extremely hot. There are a few little palm trees there in the shade of which they sow watermelons. . . . Mutton is abundant there and the people's clothes are of Egyptian cloth of good quality. Most of the inhabitants there belong to the Masufa, whose women are of surpassing beauty and have a higher status than the men.

THE MASUFA LIVING IN IWALATAN

These people have remarkable and strange ways. As for their men, they feel no jealousy. None of them traces his descent through his father, but from his maternal uncle, and a man's heirs are

the sons of his sister only, to the exclusion of his own sons. This is something that I have seen nowhere in the world except among the Indian infidels in the land of Mulaybar, whereas these are Muslims who observe the prayer and study fiqh¹¹ and memorize the Qur'an. As for their women, they have no modesty in the presence of men and do not veil themselves in spite of their assiduity in prayer. If anybody wishes to marry one of them he may do so, but they do not travel with the husband, and if one of them wished to do so her family would prevent her.

The women there have friends and companions among the foreign men, just as the men have companions from among the foreign women. One of them may enter his house and find his wife with her man friend without making any objection. . . .

One day I went into the presence of Abu Muhammad Yandakan al-Masufi in whose company we had come and found him sitting on a carpet. In the courtyard of his house there was a canopied couch with a woman on it conversing with a man seated. I said to him: "Who is this woman?" He said: "She is my wife." I said: "What connection has the man with her?" He replied: "He is her friend." I said to him: "Do you acquiesce in this when you have lived in our country and become acquainted with the precepts of the Shar?"¹² He replied: "The association of women with men is agreeable to us and a part of good conduct, to which no suspicion attaches. They are not like the women of your country." I was astonished at his laxity. I left him, and did not return thereafter. He invited me several times but I did not accept.

When I resolved to travel to Mali . . . I hired a guide from the Masufa, since there is no need to travel in company because of the security of that road, and set off with three of my companions. . . .

Then we . . . arrived at the River Sansara, which is about ten miles from the capital of Mali.

⁶Merchants from North Africa: Berbers and Arabs.

⁷The sultan's overseer of the town's markets.

⁸Millet.

⁹An Islamic religious judge.

¹⁰A teacher of religion.

¹¹Religion.

¹²*Shari'a*, or Islamic Sacred Law.

It is their custom to prevent people from entering it except by authorization. I had written before this to the white community . . . to ask them to rent a house for me. When I reached the afore-mentioned river I crossed it by the ferry without anybody preventing me. I arrived at the town of Mali, the seat of the king of the Sudan. . . .

THE SULTAN OF MALI

He is the sultan Mansa Sulayman.¹³ *Mansa* means "sultan" and Sulayman is his name. He is a miserly king from whom no great donation is to be expected. It happened that I remained for this period without seeing him on account of my illness. Then he gave a memorial feast for our Lord Abu 'l-Hasan¹⁴ (may God be content with him) and invited the emirs and faqihs and the qadi and khatib,¹⁵ and I went with them. They brought copies of the Qur'an and the Qur'an was recited in full. They prayed for our lord Abu 'l-Hasan (may God have mercy on him) and prayed for Mansa Sulayman. When this was finished I advanced and greeted Mansa Sulayman and the qadi and the khatib and Ibn al-Faqih told him who I was. He answered them in their language and they said to me: "The sultan says to you: 'I thank God.'" I replied: "Praise and thanks be to God in every circumstance."

THEIR TRIVIAL RECEPTION GIFT AND THEIR RESPECT FOR IT

When I departed the reception gift was sent to me and dispatched to the qadi's house. The qadi sent it with his men to the house of Ibn al-Faqih. Ibn al-Faqih hastened out of his house barefooted

and came in to me saying: "Come! The cloth and gift of the sultan have come to you!" I got up, thinking that it would be robes of honor and money, but behold! it was three loaves of bread and a piece of beef fried in *gharti*¹⁶ and a gourd containing yogurt. When I saw it I laughed, and was long astonished at their feeble intellect and their respect for mean things.

MY SPEAKING TO THE SULTAN AFTER THIS AND HIS KINDNESS TOWARDS ME

After this reception gift I remained for two months during which nothing was sent to me by the sultan and the month of Ramadan¹⁷ came in. Meanwhile I frequented the *mashwar* [council-place] and used to greet him and sit with the qadi and the khatib. I spoke with Dugha the interpreter, who said: "Speak with him, and I will express what you want to say in the proper fashion." So when he held a session at the beginning of Ramadan and I stood before him and said: "I have journeyed to the countries of the world and met their kings. I have been four months in your country without your giving me a reception gift or anything else. What shall I say of you in the presence of other sultans?" He replied: "I have not seen you nor known about you." The qadi and Ibn al-Faqih rose and replied to him saying: "He greeted you and you sent to him some food." Thereupon he ordered that a house be provided for me to stay in and an allowance to be allotted to me. Then, on the night of 27 Ramadan, he distributed among the qadi and the khatib and the faqihs a sum of money which they call *zakah*¹⁸ and gave to me with them 33 1/3 mithqals.¹⁹ When I departed he bestowed on me 100 mithqals of gold. . . .

¹³The brother of Mansa Musa (Chapter 8 Vol. A, source 62), Mansa Sulayman ruled Mali from 1341 to 1360.

¹⁴The late sultan of Morocco (r. 1331–1351).

¹⁵A public preacher at Friday mosque services.

¹⁶A vegetable oil.

¹⁷The month during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset.

¹⁸Alms distributed at the end of Ramadan.

¹⁹One *mithqal* was 4.72 grams of gold.

THE SELF-DEBASEMENT OF THE SUDAN BEFORE THEIR KING AND THEIR SCATTERING OF DUST ON THEMSELVES BEFORE HIM AND OTHER PECULIARITIES

The Sudan are the humblest of people before their king and the most submissive towards him. They swear by his name, saying: "*Mansa Sulayman ki.*" When he calls to one of them at his sessions in the pavilion which we have mentioned the person called takes off his clothes and puts on ragged clothes, and removes his turban and puts on a dirty *shashiyya*²⁰ and goes in holding up his garments and trousers half-way up his leg, and advances with submissiveness and humility. He then beats the ground vigorously with his two elbows, and stands like one performing a *rak'a*²¹ to listen to his words.

If one of them addresses the sultan and the latter replies he uncovers the clothes from his back and sprinkles dust on his head and back, like one washing himself with water. I used to marvel how their eyes did not become blinded. . . .

WHAT I APPROVED OF AND WHAT I DISAPPROVED OF AMONG THE ACTS OF THE SUDAN

One of their good features is their lack of oppression. They are the farthest removed of people from it and their sultan does not permit anyone to practice it. Another is the security embracing the whole country, so that neither traveler there nor dweller has anything to fear from thief or usurper. Another is that they do not interfere with the wealth of any white man who dies among them, even though it be *qintar* upon *qintar*.²² They simply leave it in the hands of a

trustworthy white man until the one to whom it is due takes it. Another is their assiduity in prayer and their persistence in performing it in congregation and beating their children to make them perform it. If it is a Friday and a man does not go early to the mosque he will not find anywhere to pray because of the press of the people. It is their habit that every man sends his servant with his prayer-mat to spread it for him in a place which he thereby has a right to until he goes to the mosque. Their prayer-carpets are made from the fronds of the tree resembling the palm which has no fruit. Another of their good features is their dressing in fine white clothes on Friday. If any one of them possesses nothing but a ragged shirt he washes it and cleanses it and attends the Friday prayer in it. Another is their eagerness to memorize the great Qur'an. They place fetters on their children if there appears on their part a failure to memorize it and they are not undone until they memorize it.

I went into the house of the qadi on the day of the festival and his children were fettered so I said to him: "Aren't you going to let them go?" He replied: "I shan't do so until they've got the Qur'an by heart!" One day I passed by a youth of theirs, of good appearance and dressed in fine clothes, with a heavy fetter on his leg. I said to those who were with me: "What has this boy done? Has he killed somebody?" The lad understood what I had said and laughed, and they said to me: "He's only been fettered so that he'll learn the Qur'an!"

One of their disapproved acts is that their female servants and slave girls and little girls appear before men naked, with their privy parts uncovered. During Ramadan I saw many of them in this state, for it is the custom of the *farariyya*²³ to break their fast²⁴ in the house of the sultan, and each one brings his food carried by twenty or more of his slave girls, they all being naked.

²⁰A skull cap.

²¹A set sequence of utterances and gestures that form the *salah*, or obligatory ritual prayer, that Muslims must engage in five times daily.

²²"Weight upon weight" (i.e., a large amount of wealth).

²³Emirs, or chief men.

²⁴The daily fast of the month of Ramadan ends at sunset (note 17).

Another is that their women go into the sultan's presence naked and uncovered, and that his daughters go naked. On the night of 25 Ramadan I saw about two hundred slave girls bringing out food from his palace naked, having with them

two of his daughters with rounded breasts having no covering upon them. Another is their sprinkling dust and ashes on their heads out of good manners. . . . Another is that many of them eat carrion, and dogs, and donkeys.²⁵

²⁵Unclean meat, according to qur'anic law.

Zheng He's Western Voyages



110 ▼ *Ma Huan,* *THE OVERALL SURVEY* *OF THE OCEAN'S SHORES*

Vigorous expansionism characterized the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), particularly during the reign of Chengzu, known as the *Yongle Emperor* (r. 1402–1424). Between 1405 and 1421 this emperor sent out a series of six great fleets under the command of China's most famous admiral, a Muslim eunuch of Mongolian ancestry named *Zheng He* (1371–1435). If we can believe the records, several fleets carried in excess of twenty-seven thousand sailors, soldiers, and officials. The first expedition of 1405–1407 reportedly consisted of 317 vessels, including 62 massive treasure ships, some of which were over 400 feet long, more than 150 feet wide (imagine a ship larger than a football field), and around 3,100 tons in weight. These armadas — as well as a seventh, which went out in 1431 and returned in 1433 — sailed through the waters of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, visiting numerous ports of call in such far-away places as the Spice Islands, India, East Africa, and the Arabian Peninsula.

Following long-established Arab and Chinese sailing routes, these expeditions were certainly not voyages of exploration. Rather, their main purpose appears to have been the reassertion of Chinese prestige to the south and west. Like the expedition that Zhou Daguan joined a century earlier, these fleets were commissioned to accept the submission and tribute of the foreign rulers they encountered. A secondary purpose seems to have been to stimulate China's economy and strengthen its commercial position in South Asia, particularly in light of the fact that the armies of Timur the Lame had severed the old Silk Road.

Despite the psychological impact the fleets' show of strength had upon the people they visited (in one area of Thailand, Zheng He was remembered as a god), China never dominated the Indian Ocean. After the Yongle Emperor's death, the imperial court did not follow through on what had begun so well. The reasons are not too difficult to discern. The cost of mounting the expeditions was prohibitively high. Moreover, the Confucian literarchy, with its traditional contempt for commerce and foreign cultures, was on the ascendance after the Yongle Emperor's death. Although Zheng He was allowed to lead a seventh expedition westward, it proved to be China's last moment of transoceanic greatness. The

court called a halt to further overseas adventures; the fleet was allowed to decay; and China deliberately and effectively forgot much of the naval technology that had made it the world's greatest maritime power in the ages of Song and early Ming.

The following account describes various sites visited in the course of three of Zheng He's expeditions in western waters. Its author, Ma Huan (ca. 1380–after 1451), a Chinese Muslim, joined the fourth voyage (1413–1415) as an Arabic translator, and upon his return transcribed his notes into book form. He later sailed on the sixth (1421–1422) and seventh (1431–1433) expeditions and amended his account accordingly, eventually publishing it in 1451.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What evidence is there that the emperor saw these expeditions as a way of extending Chinese influence abroad?
2. How did Zheng He use both diplomacy and military force to achieve this objective?
3. What evidence is there that these expeditions also served commercial purposes?
4. What evidence is there that there was a high level of international commerce in the Indian Ocean well before the coming of Zheng He's fleets?

THE COUNTRY OF MANLAJIA¹ (MALACCA)

From Zhan City² you go due south, and after traveling for eight days with a fair wind the ship comes to Longya strait,³ after entering the strait you travel west; and you can reach this place in two days.

Formerly this place was not designated a "country"; and because the sea hereabouts was named "Five Islands," the place was in consequence named "Five Islands." There was no king of the country; and it was controlled only by a chief. This territory was subordinate to the jurisdiction of Xian Luo;⁴ it paid an annual tribute of forty *liang*⁵ of gold, and if it were not

paid, then Xian Luo would send men to attack it.

In the seventh year of the Yongle period,⁶ the Emperor ordered the principal envoy, the grand eunuch Zheng He, and others to assume command (of the treasure-ships), and to take the imperial edicts and to bestow upon this chief two silver seals, a hat, a belt and a robe. Zheng He set up a stone tablet and raised the place to a city; and it was subsequently called the "country of Manlajia." Thereafter Xian Luo did not dare to invade it.

The chief, having received the favor of being made king, conducted his wife and son, and went to the court at the capital⁷ to return thanks and to present tribute of local products. The court

¹Malacca, a port on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula.

²In Champa (central Vietnam).

³The Singapore Strait.

⁴Thailand.

⁵About forty-eight ounces.

⁶1409. This would be the third expedition of 1409–1411.

⁷Nanjing (Southern Capital). The Ming court moved from

the seaport capital of Nanjing to inland Beijing (Northern Capital) in 1421, signaling a shift in China's focus toward the Middle Kingdom's age-old area of primary concern — the steppes and the steppe peoples who inhabited them. The Ming Dynasty also constructed the Great Wall as we see it today — massive frontier fortifications to protect China from invasions out of Inner Asia.

also granted him a sea-going ship, so that he might return to his country and protect his land. . . .

Whenever the treasure-ships of the Central Country⁸ arrived there, they at once erected a line of stockading, like a city-wall, and set up towers for the watchdrums at four gates; at night they had patrols of police carrying bells; inside, again, they erected a second stockade, like a small city-wall, within which they constructed warehouses and granaries; and all the money and provisions were stored in them. The ships which had gone to various countries⁹ returned to this place and assembled; they marshaled the foreign goods and loaded them in the ships; then waited till the south wind was perfectly favorable. In the middle decade of the fifth moon they put to sea and returned home.¹⁰

Moreover, the king of the country made a selection of local products, conducted his wife and son, brought his chiefs, boarded a ship and followed the treasure-ships; and he attended at court and presented tribute. . . .

THE COUNTRY OF SUMENDALA¹¹ (SEMUDERA, LHO SEUMAWÉ)

The country of Sumendala is exactly the same country as that formerly named Xuwendana. This place is indeed the principal center of the Western Ocean. . . .

The king of the country of Sumendala had previously been raided by the "tattooed-face king" of Naguer; and in the fighting he received a poisoned arrow in the body and died. He had one son, who was young and unable to avenge his father's death. The king's wife made a vow before the people, saying "If there is anyone who can avenge my husband's death and recover his land, I am willing to marry him and to share

with him the management of the country's affairs." When she finished speaking, a fisherman belonging to the place was fired with determination, and said "I can avenge him."

Thereupon he took command of an army and at once put the "tattooed-face king" to flight in battle; and later he avenged the former king's death when the "tattooed-face king" was killed. The people of the latter submitted and did not dare to carry on hostilities.

Whereupon the wife of the former king, failing not to carry out her previous vow, forthwith married the fisherman. He was styled "the old king," and in such things as the affairs of the royal household and the taxation of the land, everybody accepted the old king's decisions. In the seventh year of the Yongle period¹² the old king, in fulfillment of his duty, brought tribute of local products,¹³ and was enriched by the kindness of Heaven;¹⁴ and in the tenth year of the Yongle period¹⁵ he returned to his country.

When the son of the former king had grown up, he secretly plotted with the chiefs, murdered his adoptive father the fisherman, usurped his position, and ruled the kingdom.

The fisherman had a son by his principal wife; his name was Sukanla; he took command of his people, and they fled away, taking their families; and, after erecting a stockade in the neighboring mountains, from time to time he led his men in incursions to take revenge on his father's enemies. In the thirteenth year of the Yongle period¹⁶ the principal envoy, the grand eunuch Zheng He, and others, commanding a large fleet of treasure-ships, arrived there; they dispatched soldiers who captured Sukanla; and he went to the capital;¹⁷ and was publicly executed. The king's son was grateful for the imperial kindness, and constantly presented tribute of local products to the court. . . .

⁸China, the Middle Kingdom.

⁹Elements were detached from the main fleet and sent off on special missions.

¹⁰1433, the last expedition.

¹¹Semudera on the north coast of the island of Sumatra and across the Strait of Malacca from Malaysia.

¹²1409.

¹³To the Ming court at Nanjing.

¹⁴The emperor.

¹⁵1412.

¹⁶1415.

¹⁷Presumably Nanjing.

At this place there are foreign¹⁸ ships going and coming in large numbers, hence all kinds of foreign goods are sold in great quantities in the country.

In this country they use gold coins and tin coins. The foreign name for the gold coin is *dinaer*;¹⁹ they use pale gold, seventy percent pure, for casting it. . . . The foreign name for the tin coin is *jiashi*,²⁰ and in all their trading they regularly use tin coins. . . .

THE COUNTRY OF GULI²¹ (CALICUT)

This is the great country of the Western Ocean. . . .

In the fifth year of the Yongle period the court ordered the principal envoy, the grand eunuch Zheng He, and others²² to deliver an imperial mandate to the king of this country and to bestow on him a patent conferring a title of honor, and the grant of a silver seal, also to promote all the chiefs and award them hats and belts of various grades.

So Zheng He went there in command of a large fleet of treasure-ships, and he erected a tablet with a pavilion over it and set up a stone which said, "Though the journey from this country to the Central Country is more than a hundred thousand *li*,²³ yet the people are very similar, happy and prosperous, with identical customs. We have here engraved a stone, a perpetual declaration for ten thousand ages."

The king of the country is a Nankun²⁴ man; he is a firm believer in the Buddhist religion²⁵ and he venerates the elephant and the ox.

The population of the country includes five classes, the Muslim people, the Nankun people, the Zhedi people, the Geling people, and the Mugua²⁶ people. . . .

The king has two great chiefs who administer the affairs of the country; both are Muslims. . . .

The people are very honest and trustworthy. Their appearance is smart, fine, and distinguished.

Their two great chiefs received promotion and awards from the court of the Central Country.

If a treasure-ship goes there, it is left entirely to the two men to superintend the buying and selling; the king sends a chief and a Zhedi Weinuoji²⁷ to examine the account books in the official bureau; a broker comes and joins them; and a high officer who commands the ships discusses the choice of a certain date for fixing prices. When the day arrives, they first of all take the silk embroideries and the open-work silks, and other such goods which have been brought there, and discuss the price of them one by one; and when the price has been fixed, they write out an agreement stating the amount of the price; this agreement is retained by these persons. . . .

THE COUNTRY OF HULUMOSI²⁸ (HORMUZ)

Setting sail from the country of Guli, you go towards the north-west; and you can reach this place after traveling with a fair wind for twenty-five days. The capital lies beside the sea and up against the mountains.

Foreign ships from every place and foreign merchants traveling by land all come to this

¹⁸Non-Chinese.

¹⁹From the Arabic *dinar*.

²⁰The English would later transliterate this local word as "cash."

²¹Calicut on India's southwest coast (not to be confused with Calcutta in the northeast).

²²1407. This was the second expedition (1407–1409). Although Zheng He was its nominal commander, he did not accompany it.

²³A *li* is a bit more than one-third of a mile.

²⁴Upper class. He probably means a member of the Kshatriya, or warrior-ruler, caste.

²⁵Incorrect; he was Hindu.

²⁶These would be the four castes, or varnas.

²⁷Probably an accountant.

²⁸Hormuz, an island off the coast of Iran and at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

country to attend the market and trade; hence the people of the country are all rich. . . .

The king of this country, too, took a ship and loaded it with lions, *qilin*,²⁹ horses, pearls, precious stones, and other things, also a memorial to the throne written on a golden leaf; and he

sent his chiefs and other men, who accompanied the treasure-ships dispatched by the Emperor, which were returning from the Western Ocean; and they went to the capital and presented tribute.³⁰

²⁹A giraffe.

³⁰This probably took place at the end of the seventh expedition.

The Origins of Portugal's Overseas Empire



111 ▼ *Gomes Eannes de Azurara,* *THE CHRONICLE OF GUINEA*

At the same time that Zheng He's fleets were sailing majestically through the western seas and Muslim sailors dominated the coastal traffic of virtually every inhabited land washed by the Indian Ocean (except Australia), the Portuguese were tentatively inching down the west coast of Africa. From 1419 onward, Prince Henry (1394–1460), third son of King John I (r. 1385–1433), almost annually sent out a ship or two in an attempt to push farther toward the sub-Saharan land the Portuguese called *Guinea*; only in 1434, however, did one of his caravels manage to round the feared Cape Bojador, along the western Sahara coast. Once this psychological and navigational barrier had been broken, the pace of exploration quickened. By 1460 Portuguese sailors had ventured as far south as modern Sierra Leone, an advance of about fifteen hundred miles in twenty-six years. Finally, Bartholomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa in early 1488, and Vasco da Gama, seeking, in his words, "Christians and spices," dropped anchor off Calicut on May 20, 1498. Although da Gama lost two of his four ships and many of his crew, the profits from this small enterprise were astounding. Portugal was now in the Indian Ocean to stay.

Portugal's commercial empire was still over half a century in the future when, in 1452, Gomes Eannes de Azurara (ca. 1400–after 1472) began to compose a history of the life and work of Prince Henry "the Navigator," in so many ways the father of an empire-to-be. Azurara's history details Portuguese explorations along the coast of West Africa down to 1448. He promised a sequel because Henry was still alive and actively promoting voyages to Africa when Azurara completed *The Chronicle of Guinea* in 1453. Azurara's other duties apparently intervened, and he never returned to the topic. Still, the chronicle he managed to write is a revealing picture of the spirit behind Portugal's first generation of oceanic exploration and colonialism.

In the following excerpts Azurara explains why Prince Henry sponsored the expeditions and defends the consequent enslavement of West Africans. Trade in Guinean slaves, which became an integral part of Portugal's commercial imperi-

alism, began in 1441 with the capture of 10 Africans, and Azurara estimated that 927 West African slaves had come into Portugal by 1448. This humane man, who was disturbed by many of the aspects of this exploitation, could not foresee that between 1450 and 1500 roughly 150,000 more Africans would enter Portugal as slaves, and over the next four centuries untold millions of so-called heathens would be transported out of Africa by European and Euro-American slavers.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What were Henry's motives? What seems to have been foremost in his mind — commercial, political, or religious gain or simple curiosity?
2. Some modern commentators argue that Europeans initially entered the African slave trade out of a sense of racial superiority. Based on this account, do you think Azurara would agree with that assessment? In other words, how does he justify the enslavement of Africans? Please be specific in your answer.
3. It has been said that Henry was a fifteenth-century crusader. From the evidence, does this seem to be a fair judgment? Why or why not?
4. Compare this document with Christopher Columbus's letter of 1493 in the Prologue. Do they seem to share a common spirit? If so, what is it?
5. Compare the purposes behind the Portuguese and Spanish explorations with those of Zheng He's expeditions. In what ways do they differ, and to what do you ascribe those differences?

We imagine that we know a matter when we are acquainted with the doer of it and the end for which he did it. And since in former chapters we have set forth the Lord Infant¹ as the chief actor in these things, giving as clear an understanding of him as we could, it is meet that in this present chapter we should know his purpose in doing them. And you should note well that the noble spirit of this Prince, by a sort of natural constraint, was ever urging him both to begin and to carry out very great deeds. For which reason, after the taking of Ceuta² he always kept ships well armed against the Infidel, both for war, and because he had also a wish to know the land that lay beyond the isles of Canary and that

Cape called Bojador, for that up to his time, neither by writings, nor by the memory of man, was known with any certainty the nature of the land beyond that Cape. Some said indeed that Saint Brendan³ had passed that way; and there was another tale of two galleys rounding the Cape, which never returned. But this does not appear at all likely to be true, for it is not to be presumed that if the said galleys went there, some other ships would not have endeavored to learn what voyage they had made. And because the said Lord Infant wished to know the truth of this — since it seemed to him that if he or some other lord did not endeavor to gain that knowledge, no mariners or merchants would ever dare to

¹Prince Henry. An *infante* (feminine *infanta*) was any son of a Portuguese or Spanish monarch who was not an heir to the Crown.

²A Muslim naval base in Morocco that Portugal captured in 1415.

³A wandering Irish monk of the sixth century; according to legend, he set sail into the Atlantic.

attempt it — (for it is clear that none of them ever trouble themselves to sail to a place where there is not a sure and certain hope of profit) — and seeing also that no other prince took any pains in this matter, he sent out his own ships against those parts, to have manifest certainty of them all. And to this he was stirred up by his zeal for the service of God and of the King Edward his Lord and brother,⁴ who then reigned. And this was the first reason of his action.

The second reason was that if there chanced to be in those lands some population of Christians, or some havens, into which it would be possible to sail without peril, many kinds of merchandise might be brought to this realm, which would find a ready market, and reasonably so, because no other people of these parts traded with them, nor yet people of any other that were known; and also the products of this realm might be taken there, which traffic would bring great profit to our countrymen.

The third reason was that, as it was said that the power of the Moors in that land of Africa was very much greater than was commonly supposed, and that there were no Christians among them, nor any other race of men; and because every wise man is obliged by natural prudence to wish for a knowledge of the power of his enemy; therefore the said Lord Infant exerted himself to cause this to be fully discovered, and to make it known determinately how far the power of those infidels extended.

The fourth reason was because during the one and thirty years that he had warred against the

Moors, he had never found a Christian king, nor a lord outside this land, who for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ would aid him in the said war. Therefore he sought to know if there were in those parts any Christian princes, in whom the charity and the love of Christ was so ingrained that they would aid him against those enemies of the faith.

The fifth reason was his great desire to make increase in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and to bring to him all the souls that should be saved, — understanding that all the mystery of the Incarnation, Death, and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ was for this sole end — namely the salvation of lost souls — whom the said Lord Infant by his travail and spending would fain bring into the true path. For he perceived that no better offering could be made unto the Lord than this; for if God promised to return one hundred goods for one, we may justly believe that for such great benefits, that is to say for so many souls as were saved by the efforts of this Lord, he will have so many hundreds of rewards in the kingdom of God, by which his spirit may be glorified after this life in the celestial realm. For I who wrote this history saw so many men and women of those parts turned to the holy faith, that even if the Infant had been a heathen, their prayers would have been enough to have obtained his salvation. And not only did I see the first captives,⁵ but their children and grandchildren as true Christians as if the Divine grace breathed in them and imparted to them a clear knowledge of itself.

⁴King Duarte (r. 1433–1438).

⁵West African slaves who had been captured and transported to Portugal by licensed slave hunters. As the slave trade developed, the vast majority of slaves transported out of

Africa by Europeans and, later, Euro-Americans would be purchased from native African slavers (see Chapter 3, source 116).

Chapter 3

Transoceanic Encounters

1500–1700

Although aggressive expansion had already been part of the dynamics of European civilization for over seven hundred years, its transoceanic explorations from the late fifteenth century onward mark a turning point in the history not only of the West but of the entire world. Europe's push across wide expanses of ocean eventually became the single most important factor in the breakdown of regional isolation around the world and the creation of a true global community in the years after 1500.

The story is not simple. By 1700 Europeans had culturally and demographically altered forever large areas of the Americas, but they had yet to visit much of those two great continents. The major civilizations of East Asia were still successfully resisting most unwanted European influences, and European penetration of India's interior had hardly begun. At the end of the seventeenth century, Western exploration and direct exploitation of the regions of Africa beyond the coasts were even less advanced. Moreover, although it is easy from a twenty-first-century perspective to see in its early transoceanic ventures the origins of Europe's eventual dominance of the world, this would not have been apparent to most people living during these two centuries. For every area into which Europeans were expanding their influence, there was another in which they were retreating or being rebuffed. For example, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europeans fearfully witnessed the advancing menace of the Ottoman Turks into Europe itself.

Under Sultan Suleiman I (r. 1520–1566), the Ottoman Empire became a major force to be reckoned with so far as Europe was concerned. In 1522 Suleiman's armies established

control over the eastern Mediterranean by seizing the island of Rhodes. In 1526 the Turks destroyed a Hungarian army and within two decades controlled most of that Christian kingdom. By the autumn of 1529 Ottoman forces besieged Vienna but were forced to withdraw. The Ottoman Turks remained Europe's greatest challenger for the next two centuries, and many believed that the next time Ottoman soldiers advanced on Vienna they would not be stopped. Indeed, the siege of 1683 failed only by the slightest margin.

Equally impressive was the expansion of Chinese borders, especially during the reign of Emperor *Kangxi* (r. 1661–1722), when China took control of the island of Formosa (modern Taiwan), incorporated Tibet into its empire, finally turned the nomads of Mongolia into quiescent vassals, and entered into a border treaty with imperial Russia that inaugurated a long period of Sino-Russian peace. On its part, Russia carved out the largest land empire of its day through a steady process of exploration and colonization across Eurasia's eastern forests and steppes. In 1637 Russian pioneers reached the Pacific, and colonists were not far behind. Given this state of affairs, Western Europeans did not see expansion as a one-way street, nor did they see themselves as aggressors and the rest of the world as their victims.

Europeans in the Americas

As Columbus's letter of 1493 indicates, Europeans almost instantly discovered that the world across the Atlantic contained exploitable sources of wealth (such as silver, gold, timber, and furs) and was capable of supporting large-scale agricultural production of such crops as sugar and tobacco, for which there was an eager European market. All these things seemed theirs for the taking, not only in the thinly populated regions of North America and eastern and southern South America, but even in the densely populated regions of Mexico, Peru, and the Caribbean.

The consequences of this attitude were catastrophic for America's indigenous peoples. By 1650 Spaniards and Portuguese ruled and exploited Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and southern portions of North America; the English, French, Dutch, and other Europeans had begun to settle the northern portions of North America's Atlantic coast and the Saint Lawrence River Basin. In the wake of these European incursions, Native American political structures disintegrated, uncounted millions of Amerindians died, and traditional patterns of life and belief managed only a tenuous (but tenacious) survival.

While this sad story is true enough, it would be incorrect to say that the majority of the European colonists and the governments who supported them attempted

to exterminate the Native Americans. Certainly most European colonists sought to exploit the Amerindians, and even the Amerindians' protectors sought to convert them to European religious beliefs, thereby offering the natives a form of cultural suicide. Moreover, there is no denying the fact that the European newcomers contained within their ranks a number of ruthless thugs who did not hesitate to brutalize and kill, sometimes on a large scale. Still, there is no credible evidence of any widespread attempts at *genocide*, or the systematic, state-sponsored annihilation of an entire people. Such a notion was inconsistent with the world view and aims of the European colonizers who, as we saw in Columbus's letter of 1493, sought souls to save and slaves for servitude.

Europeans might have lacked the intention of killing off millions of Native Americans, but they managed unintentionally to do so, as a consequence of the viruses, bacteria, and other parasites that they carried across the Atlantic in their bodies. What is more, when West African slaves were brought to the Caribbean to replace the native populations that were rapidly dying off, additional fatal diseases came into the Americas. Smallpox, measles, diphtheria, chicken pox, whooping cough, influenza, malaria, yellow fever — all of these and more became killers when introduced into populations that lacked genetic resistance, due to their thousands of years of isolation from the Afro-Eurasian World.

The Tainos, who greeted Columbus in 1492, numbered about one million in 1492; by 1530 they numbered a few thousand. In 1519, the year of Cortés's arrival, the population of Mexico was about 21.5 million people; in 1532 it had fallen to about 16 million; at mid century, following the epidemic of 1545–1548, it was possibly as low as 2.5 million. That is a 90 percent decrease in the short space of thirty years! No part of the Americas was untouched; even areas not visited personally by Europeans felt the devastating effects of killer epidemics. The Mississippian Mound Culture of North America seems to have disappeared as an identifiable entity in the mid sixteenth century as a result of European diseases that traveled along native trade routes to its population centers well before Europeans ever saw the magnificent mound complexes that this culture left behind as silent witnesses of its former greatness.

The first of the following two documents hints at the critical role played by the hidden ally of disease in the Spanish *conquistadors'* conquest of Mexico. It also suggests other factors that combined to give the Spaniards their victory. The second source reveals the devastating effects of simple greed on the part of Spanish entrepreneurs in Peru.

The Battle for Tenochtitlán: An Aztec Perspective



112 ▼ *Bernardino de Sahagún,* *GENERAL HISTORY OF THE* *THINGS OF NEW SPAIN*

Bernardino de Sahagún (ca. 1499–1590), a member of the Franciscan Order, was one of the earliest Spanish missionaries in Mexico, arriving in 1529. He soon developed a keen interest in the culture of the natives of Mexico, for whom he had deep affection and respect. He mastered the *Nahuatl* language, spoken by the Aztecs and other central Mexican peoples, and in 1545 began a systematic collection of oral and pictorial information about the culture of the native Mexicans. The result was his *General History of the Things of New Spain*, our principal source of information about Mexican culture at the time of the Spanish conquest. Many Spaniards opposed his work because they believed his efforts to preserve the memory of native culture threatened their policy of exploiting and Christianizing the Amerindians. As a result, in 1578 his writings and notes were confiscated by royal decree and sent back to Spain, where they gathered dust in an archive until discovered and published in the nineteenth century.

The following selection comes from the twelfth and last book of the *General History*. Based on interviews Sahagún and his Amerindian assistants had with Aztecs who had experienced the conquest some twenty-five years earlier, Book Twelve, which exists in both Nahuatl and Spanish versions, recounts the conquest of Mexico from the time Cortés arrived on the Mexican coast in April 1519 until the days following the Aztecs' capitulation in August 1521. Although scholars hotly debate the exact role of Sahagún and his assistants in composing and organizing Book Twelve, most agree that it accurately portrays Aztec views and perceptions of the events that unfolded between 1519 and 1521.

Our excerpt, translated from the Nahuatl text, picks up the story in November 1519. By then the Spaniards had gained as allies the Tlaxcalans, the Aztecs' bitter enemies, and were leaving Cholula, an ancient city that the Spaniards and their allies had sacked because of its leaders' lack of cooperation. They were on their way to Tenochtitlán, the splendid Aztec capital on Lake Texcoco, for an anticipated meeting with the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does the source reveal about the motives of the Spaniards and their allies for their attack on the Aztecs?
2. What was Moctezuma's strategy to deal with the Spaniards? Why did it fail?
3. What impression did Spanish firearms and cannons have on the Aztecs? What evidence is there that the Aztecs adjusted their strategy to counter the Spanish weapons?

4. Aside from their firearms, what other military advantages did the Spaniards have over their opponents? How decisive do these other advantages seem to have been?
5. On several occasions the Aztecs routed the Spaniards. What explains these Aztec victories?
6. How did the Aztec view of war differ from that of the Spaniards?
7. What does the source reveal about Aztec religious beliefs, values, and practices?

And after the dying in Cholula, the Spaniards set off on their way to Mexico,¹ coming gathered and bunched, raising dust. . . .

Thereupon Moteucçoma² named and sent noblemen and a great many other agents of his . . . to go meet [Cortés] . . . at Quauhtechcac. They gave [the Spaniards] golden banners of precious feathers, and golden necklaces.

And when they had given the things to them, they seemed to smile, to rejoice and to be very happy. Like monkeys they grabbed the gold. It was as though their hearts were put to rest, brightened, freshened. For gold was what they greatly thirsted for; they were gluttonous for it, starved for it, piggishly wanting it. They came lifting up the golden banners, waving them from side to side, showing them to each other. They seemed to babble; what they said to each other was in a babbling tongue. . . .

Another group of messengers — rainmakers, witches, and priests — had also gone out for an encounter, but nowhere were they able to do anything or to get sight of [the Spaniards]; they did not hit their target, they did not find the people they were looking for, they were not sufficient. . . .

▷ Cortés and his entourage continue their march.

Then they set out in this direction, about to enter Mexico here. Then they all dressed and equipped themselves for war. They girded themselves, tying their battle gear tightly on themselves and then on their horses. Then they arranged themselves in rows, files, ranks.

Four horsemen came ahead going first, staying ahead, leading. . . .

Also the dogs, their dogs, came ahead, sniffing at things and constantly panting.³

By himself came marching ahead, all alone, the one who bore the standard on his shoulder. He came waving it about, making it spin, tossing it here and there. . . .

Following him came those with iron swords. Their iron swords came bare and gleaming. On their shoulders they bore their shields, of wood or leather.

The second contingent and file were horses carrying people, each with his cotton cuirass,⁴ his leather shield, his iron lance, and his iron sword hanging down from the horse's neck. They came with bells on, jingling or rattling. The horses, the deer,⁵ neighed, there was much neighing, and they would sweat a great deal; water seemed to fall from them. And their flecks of foam splatted on the ground, like soapsuds splatting. . . .

The third file were those with iron crossbows, the crossbowmen. Their quivers went hanging

¹Throughout the text, the term *Mexico* refers to Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec Empire. *Mexica* refers to the people of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco, a large suburb of Tenochtitlán.

²One of several acceptable modern spellings of the Aztec emperor's name, including *Moctezuma*, *Motecuhzoma*, and *Montezuma*.

³Specially bred war dogs for use in combat.

⁴A piece of armor that covered the body from neck to waist.

⁵Having never before seen horses, some Aztecs considered them to be large deer.

at their sides, passed under their armpits, well filled, packed with arrows, with iron bolts. . . .

The fourth file were likewise horsemen; their outfits were the same as has been said.

The fifth group were those with harquebuses,⁶ the harquebusiers, shouldering their harquebuses; some held them [level]. And when they went into the great palace, the residence of the ruler, they repeatedly shot off their harquebuses. They exploded, sputtered, discharged, thundered, disgorged. Smoke spread, it grew dark with smoke, everyplace filled with smoke. The fetid smell made people dizzy and faint.

Then all those from the various altepetl⁷ on the other side of the mountains, the Tlaxcalans, the people of Tliluhquitepec, of Huexotzinco, came following behind. They came outfitted for war with their cotton upper armor, shields, and bows, their quivers full and packed with feathered arrows, some barbed, some blunted, some with obsidian⁸ points. They went crouching, hitting their mouths with their hands yelling, singing, . . . whistling, shaking their heads. . . .

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- ▷ Cortés and his army entered Tenochtitlán in November 1519 and were amicably received by Moctezuma, who was nonetheless taken captive by the Spaniards. Cortés's army was allowed to remain in a palace compound, but tensions grew the following spring. Pedro de Alvarado, in command while Cortés left to deal with a threat to his authority from the governor of Cuba, became increasingly concerned for the Spaniards' safety as the people of Tenochtitlán prepared to celebrate the annual festival in honor of Huitzilopochtli, the warrior god of the sun.
-

And when it had dawned and was already the day of his festivity, very early in the morning those who had made vows to him⁹ unveiled his

face. Forming a single¹⁰ row before him they offered him incense; each in his place laid down before him offerings of food for fasting and rolled amaranth¹⁰ dough. And it was as though all the youthful warriors had gathered together and had hit on the idea of holding and observing the festivity in order to show the Spaniards something, to make them marvel and instruct them.¹¹ . . .

When things were already going on, when the festivity was being observed and there was dancing and singing, with voices raised in song, the singing was like the noise of waves breaking against the rocks.

When it was time, when the moment had come for the Spaniards to do the killing, they came out equipped for battle. They came and closed off each of the places where people went in and out. . . . And when they had closed these exits, they stationed themselves in each, and no one could come out any more. . . . Then they surrounded those who were dancing, going among the cylindrical drums. They struck a drummer's arms; both of his hands were severed. Then they struck his neck; his head landed far away. Then they stabbed everyone with iron lances and struck them with iron swords. They struck some in the belly, and then their entrails came spilling out. They split open the heads of some, they really cut their skulls to pieces, their skulls were cut up into little bits. And if someone still tried to run it was useless; he just dragged his intestines along. There was a stench as if of sulfur. Those who tried to escape could go nowhere. When anyone tried to go out, at the entryways they struck and stabbed him.

And when it became known what was happening, everyone cried out, "Mexica warriors, come running, get outfitted with devices, shields, and arrows, hurry, come running, the warriors

⁶A heavy matchlock gun.

⁷The Nahuatl term for any sovereign state, especially the local ethnic states of central Mexico.

⁸A volcanic glass that can be sharpened to a razor-sharp edge.

⁹Huitzilopochtli. As god of the sun, he needed daily sacrifices of human hearts and blood in order to rise from the east each morning.

¹⁰An image of the god was fashioned from amaranth seed flour and the blood of recently sacrificed victims.

¹¹An integral part of the ceremony was the singing of hymns that extolled battle, blood, and honor on the field of conflict.

are dying; they have died, perished, been annihilated, O Mexica warriors!" Thereupon there were war cries, shouting, and beating of hands against lips. The warriors quickly came outfitted, bunched together, carrying arrows and shields. Then the fighting began; they shot at them with barbed darts, spears, and tridents, and they hurled darts with broad obsidian points at them. . . .

-
- ▷ The fighting that ensued drove the Spaniards and their allies back to the palace enclave. Without a reliable supply of food and water, in July 1520, Cortés, who had returned with his power intact, led his followers on a desperate nocturnal escape from the city, but they were discovered and suffered heavy losses as they fled. They retreated to the other side of the lake, and the Aztecs believed the Spanish threat had passed.
-

Before the Spanish appeared to us, first an epidemic broke out, a sickness of pustules.¹² . . . Large bumps spread on people; some were entirely covered. They spread everywhere, on the face, the head, the chest, etc. The disease brought great desolation; a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about, but lay in their dwellings and sleeping places, no longer able to move or stir. They were unable to change position, to stretch out on their sides or face down, or raise their heads. And when they made a motion, they called out loudly. The pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death; starvation reigned, and no one took care of others any longer.

On some people, the pustules appeared only far apart, and they did not suffer greatly, nor did many of them die of it. But many people's faces were spoiled by it, their faces and noses were made rough. Some lost an eye or were blinded.

This disease of pustules lasted a full sixty days; after sixty days it abated and ended. When people

were convalescing and reviving, the pustules disease began to move in the direction of Chalco.¹³ And many were disabled or paralyzed by it, but they were not disabled forever. . . . The Mexica warriors were greatly weakened by it.

And when things were in this state, the Spaniards came, moving toward us from Tetzaco. . . .

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- ▷ Having resupplied his Spanish/Tlaxcalan army and having constructed a dozen cannon-carrying brigantines for use on the lake, Cortés resumed his offensive late in 1520. In April 1521 he reached Tenochtitlán and placed the city under a blockade.
-

When their twelve boats had come from Tetzaco, at first they were all assembled at Acachinanco, and then the Marqués¹⁴ moved to Acachinanco. He went about searching where the boats could enter, where the canals were straight, whether they were deep or not, so that they would not be grounded somewhere. But the canals were winding and bent back and forth, and they could not get them in. They did get two boats in; they forced them down the road coming straight from Xoloco. . . .

And the two boats came gradually, keeping on one side. On the other side no boats came, because there were houses there. They came ahead, fighting as they came; there were deaths on both sides, and on both sides captives were taken. When the Tenochca who lived in Çoquipan saw this, they fled, fled in fear. . . . They took nothing at all with them, they just left all their poor property in fear, they just scattered everything in their haste. And our enemies¹⁵ went snatching things up, taking whatever they came upon. Whatever they hit on they carried away, whether cloaks, lengths of cotton cloth, warrior's devices, log drums, or cylindrical drums.

The Tlatelolca fought in Çoquipan, in war boats. And in Xoloco the Spaniards came to a

¹²Smallpox.

¹³A city on the southeast corner of Lake Texcoco.

¹⁴Cortés.

¹⁵The various Amerindian allies of the Spaniards.

place where there was a wall in the middle of the road, blocking it. They fired the big guns at it. At the first shot it did not give way, but the second time it began to crumble. The third time, at last parts of it fell to the ground, and the fourth time finally the wall went to the ground once and for all. . . .

Once they got two of their boats into the canal at Xocotitlan. When they had beached them, then they went looking into the house sites of the people of Xocotitlan. But Tzilacatzin and some other warriors who saw the Spaniards immediately came out to face them; they came running after them, throwing stones at them, and they scattered the Spaniards into the water. . . .

When they got to Tlilhuacan, the warriors crouched far down and hid themselves, hugging the ground, waiting for the war cry, when there would be shouting and cries of encouragement. When the cry went up, "O Mexica, up and at them!" the Tlappanecatl Ecatzin, a warrior of Otomi¹⁶ rank, faced the Spaniards and threw himself at them, saying, "O Tlatelolca warriors, up and at them, who are these barbarians? Come running!" Then he went and threw a Spaniard down, knocking him to the ground; the one he threw down was the one who came first, who came leading them. And when he had thrown him down, he dragged the Spaniard off.

And at this point they let loose with all the warriors who had been crouching there; they came out and chased the Spaniards in the passageways, and when the Spaniards saw it they, the Mexica, seemed to be intoxicated. Then captives were taken. Many Tlaxcalans, and people of Acolhuacan, Chalco, Xochimilco, etc.,¹⁷ were captured. A great abundance were captured and killed. . . .

Then they took the captives to Yacacolco, hurrying them along, going along herding their captives together. Some went weeping, some

singing, some went shouting while hitting their hands against their mouths. When they got them to Yacacolco, they lined them all up. Each one went to the altar platform where the sacrifice was performed.¹⁸ The Spaniards went first, going in the lead; the people of the different altepetl just followed, coming last. And when the sacrifice was over, they strung the Spaniards' heads on poles on skull racks; they also strung up the horses' heads. They placed them below, and the Spaniards' heads were above them, strung up facing east.¹⁹ . . .

▷ Despite this victory, the Aztecs could not overcome the problems of shortages of food, water, and warriors. In mid July 1521 the Spaniards and their allies resumed their assault, and in early August the Aztecs decided to send into battle a quetzal-owl warrior, whose success or failure, it was believed, would reveal if the gods wished the Aztecs to continue the war.

And all the common people suffered greatly. There was famine; many died of hunger. They no longer drank good, pure water, but the water they drank was salty. Many people died of it, and because of it many got dysentery and died. Everything was eaten: lizards, swallows, maize straw, grass that grows on salt flats. And they chewed at . . . wood, glue flowers, plaster, leather, and deerskin, which they roasted, baked, and toasted so that they could eat them, and they ground up medicinal herbs and adobe bricks. There had never been the like of such suffering. The siege was frightening, and great numbers died of hunger. And bit by bit they came pressing us back against the wall, herding us together. . . . There was no place to go; people shoved, pressed and trampled one another; many died in the press. But one woman came to very close quarters with our enemies, throwing water

¹⁶Elite warriors bound by oath never to retreat.

¹⁷Amerindian allies of the Spaniards.

¹⁸Traditionally the sacrifice consisted of cutting the heart out of the victim.

¹⁹The direction of the god Huitzilopochtli. See note 9.

at them, throwing water in their faces, making it stream down their faces.

And when the ruler Quauhtemotzin²⁰ and the warriors Coyohuehuetzin, Temilotzin, Topanemotzin, the Mixcoatlailotlac Ahuelitotzin, Tlacotzin, and Petlauhtzin took a great warrior named Tlapaltecatl opochtzin . . . and outfitted him, dressing him in a quetzal-owl costume.²¹ . . . "Let him wear it, let him die in it. Let him dazzle people with it, let him show them something; let our enemies see and admire it." When they put it on him he looked very frightening and splendid. And they ordered four [others] to come helping him, to accompany him. They gave him the darts of the devil,²² darts of wooden rods with flint tips. And the reason they did this was that it was as though the fate of the rulers of the Mexica were being determined.

When our enemies saw him, it was as though a mountain had fallen. Every one of the Spaniards was frightened; he intimidated them, they seemed to respect him a great deal. Then the

quetzal-owl climbed up on the roof. But when some of our enemies had taken a good look at him they rose and turned him back, pursuing him. Then the quetzal-owl turned them again and pursued them. Then he snatched up the precious feathers and gold and dropped down off the roof. He did not die, and our enemies did not carry him off. Also three of our enemies were captured. At that the war stopped for good. There was silence, nothing more happened. Then our enemies went away. It was silent and nothing more happened until it got dark.

And the next day nothing more happened at all, no one made a sound. The common people just lay collapsed. The Spaniards did nothing more either, but lay still, looking at the people. Nothing was going on, they just lay still. . . .

▷ Two weeks passed before the Aztecs capitulated on August 13, 1521, after a siege of over three months' duration.

²⁰Quauhtemotzin was now the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma having died while in Spanish captivity.

²¹This rare bird had been sacred to the Maya and was equally

sacred to the Aztecs. Its four iridescent blue-green tail feathers were highly prized.

²²Battle darts sacred to Huitzilopochtli.

The "Mountain of Silver" and the Mita System



113 ▼ Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa, COMPENDIUM AND DESCRIPTION OF THE WEST INDIES

Many of Columbus's dreams and promises for the lands he explored were never realized, but his vision that the inhabitants could be exploited proved all too correct. Queen Isabella was, by most accounts, disquieted by the idea of enslaving Amerindians, but forced labor came to the new Spanish colonies nevertheless, largely because it proved economically advantageous for the colonizers, especially on their plantations and in their mines.

In 1545 an Indian herder lost his footing on a mountain in Peru while chasing his llama, and to keep from falling, he grabbed a bush, which he pulled from the ground revealing a rich vein of silver. This is the most widely told story about how the Spaniards learned of the world's richest silver mine at Potosí. Located two miles above sea level in a cold, desolate region of modern Bolivia, Potosí

became the site of the Western Hemisphere's first and greatest silver rush. Within four decades Potosí had a racially mixed population of 160,000 inhabitants, making it the largest, wildest, gaudiest, and richest city in the New World. With one-fifth of all the silver extracted going directly to the Spanish crown, Potosí was a major reason why the kings of Spain were able to launch a huge naval armada against England in 1588, carry on a crusade against the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean, and send armies off to campaigns in France, the Low Countries, and central Europe. The silver of Potosí also contributed significantly to massive inflation in Spain and, as the wealth filtered out of the Iberian Peninsula, throughout Western Europe.

The backbone of the Potosí operation was the *mita* system of labor, described in the following document by Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa (d. 1630), a Spanish Carmelite friar who abandoned an academic career to do missionary work in the Americas. He returned to Spain in 1622, where he wrote a half dozen books on the Americas and topics relating to priestly work. His best known book is his *Compendium and Description of the West Indies*, an extensive summary of observations made during his travels through Mexico and Spanish South America.

In the first part of the selection that follows Espinosa describes the mine and facilities at Huancavelica for extracting mercury, a necessary element in the refining of silver. The second portion provides a wealth of details on the mining of silver at Potosí. Throughout the document, Espinosa presents insights into the functioning of the *mita* system of labor, which had its roots in the Inca Empire when villages had been required to provide an annual quota of laborers for public works projects. The Spaniards continued the practice of enforced labor quotas, at first for public works, and later for work in mines, factories, and fields owned by private individuals.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What was the range of annual wages for each laborer at Huancavelica? How did this amount of money compare with the annual salary of the royal hospital chaplain? How did the annual sum of their wages compare with the cost of tallow candles at Potosí? Compare the wages of the *mita* workers at Potosí with the wages paid those Amerindians who freely hired themselves out. What do you conclude from all these figures?
2. What were the major hazards of the work connected with the extraction and production of mercury and silver?
3. What evidence does Espinosa provide of Spanish concern for the welfare of the Amerindian workers? What evidence is there of unconcern? Where does the weight of the evidence seem to lie?
4. Wherever huge profits justify the risks, there will be people who function beyond the constraints of the law. What evidence does Espinosa provide of such a phenomenon in Spanish South America?
5. How did the *mita* system work?
6. What appears to have been the impact of the *mita* system on native Peruvian society?

HUANCAMELICA

And so at the rumor of the rich deposits of mercury . . . in the years 1570 and 1571, they started the construction of the town of Huancavelica de Oropesa in a pleasant valley at the foot of the range. It contains 400 Spanish residents, as well as many temporary shops of dealers in merchandise and groceries, heads of trading houses, and transients, for the town has a lively commerce. It has a parish church with vicar and curate,¹ a Dominican convent, and a Royal Hospital under the Brethren of San Juan de Dios for the care of the sick, especially Indians on the range; it has a chaplain with a salary of 800 pesos² contributed by His Majesty; he is curate of the parish of San Sebastian de Indios, for the Indians who have come to work in the mines and who have settled down there. There is another parish on the other side of the town, known as Santa Ana, and administered by Dominican friars.

Every two months His Majesty sends by the regular courier from Lima³ 60,000 pesos to pay for the mita of the Indians, for the crews are changed every two months, so that merely for the Indian mita payment [in my understanding of it] 360,000 pesos are sent from Lima every year, not to speak of much besides, which all crosses at his risk that cold and desolate mountain country which is the puna⁴ and has nothing on it but llama ranches.

Up on the range there are 3,000 or 4,000 Indians working in the mine; it is colder up there than in the town, since it is higher. The mine where the mercury is located is a large layer which they keep following downward. When I was in that town (which was in the year 1616) I went up on the range and down into the mine, which at that time was considerably more than 130 stades⁵ deep. The ore was very rich black flint,

and the excavation so extensive that it held more than 3,000 Indians working away hard with picks and hammers, breaking up that flint ore; and when they have filled their little sacks, the poor fellows, loaded down with ore, climb up those ladders or rigging, some like masts and others like cables, and so trying and distressing that a man empty-handed can hardly get up them. That is the way they work in this mine, with many lights and the loud noise of the pounding and great confusion. Nor is that the greatest evil and difficulty; that is due to thievish and undisciplined superintendents. As that great vein of ore keeps going down deeper and they follow its rich trail, in order to make sure that no section of that ore shall drop on top of them, they keep leaving supports or pillars of the ore itself, even if of the richest quality, and they necessarily help to sustain and insure each section with less risk. This being so, there are men so heartless that for the sake of stealing a little rich ore, they go down out of hours and deprive the innocent Indians of this protection by hollowing into these pillars to steal the rich ore in them, and then a great section is apt to fall in and kill all the Indians, and sometimes the unscrupulous and grasping superintendents themselves, as happened when I was in that locality; and much of this is kept quiet so that it shall not come to the notice of the manager and cause the punishment of the accomplices. . . .

This is how they extract the mercury. On the other side of the town there are structures where they grind up the mercury ore and then put it in jars with molds like sugar loaves on top of them, with many little holes, and others on top of them, flaring and plastered with mud, and a channel for it to drip into and pass into the jar or place where it is to fall. Then they roast the ore with a straw fire from the plant growing on the puna,

¹A parish priest and his assistant priest.

²A standard Spanish coin worth eight *reals* (note 11).

³Lima was the capital city of the viceroyalty of Peru, one of the two major administrative units of Spanish America, covering all of Spanish South America, except for part of the Caribbean coast.

⁴A high, cold plateau.

⁵A *stade* was a measure of length, approximately an eighth of a mile.

like esparto grass, which they call ichu; that is the best sort of fire for the treatment of this ore. Under the onset of this fire it melts and the mercury goes up in vapor or exhalation until, passing through the holes in the first mold, it hits the body of the second, and there it coagulates, rests, and comes to stop where they have provided lodging for it; [but] if it does not strike any solid body while it is hot, it rises as vapor until it cools and coagulates and starts falling downward again. Those who carry out the reduction of this ore have to be very careful and test cautiously; they must wait till the jars are cold before uncovering them for otherwise they may easily get mercury poisoning and if they do, they are of no further use; their teeth fall out, and some die. After melting and extracting the mercury by fire, they put it in dressed sheepskins to keep it in His Majesty's storehouses, and from there they usually transport it on llamaback to the port of Chíncha, . . . where there is a vault and an agent appointed by the Royal Council, and he has charge of it there; then they freight it on shipboard to the port of San Marcos de Arica, from which it is carried by herds of llamas and mules to Potosí. In the treatment of the silver they use up every year more than 6,000 quintals,⁶ plus 2,000 more derived from the ore dust, i.e., the silver and mercury which was lost and escaped from the first washing of the ore, made in vats.

POTOSÍ

The famous Potosí range, so celebrated all over the world for the great wealth which God has created unique in its bowels and veins, lies in the Province of the Charcas, 18 leagues from the city of Chuquisaca, which was later called La Plata, on account of the great richness of this

range. It is in the midst of the Cordillera, and since that is high-altitude country, that region is usually colder than Germany, so much so that it was uninhabitable for the native tribes. . . . On account of the cold, not a fly, mosquito, or [any] other unpleasant creature can live there; there was no living thing on that waste but guanacos, vicuñas, ostriches, and vizcachas, which are characteristic of that cold country. . . .

According to His Majesty's warrant, the mine owners on this massive range have a right to the mita of 13,300 Indians in the working and exploitation of the mines, both those which have been discovered, those now discovered, and those which shall be discovered. It is the duty of the Corregidor of Potosí⁷ to have them rounded up and to see that they come in from all the provinces between Cuzco over the whole of El Collao and as far as the frontiers of Tarija and Tomina;⁸ this Potosí Corregidor has power and authority over all the Corregidores in those provinces mentioned; for if they do not fill the Indian mita allotment assigned each of them in accordance with the capacity of their provinces as indicated to them, he can send them, and does, salaried inspectors to report upon it, and when the remissness is great or remarkable, he can suspend them, notifying the Viceroy⁹ of the fact.

These Indians are sent out every year under a captain whom they choose in each village or tribe, for him to take them and oversee them for the year each has to serve; every year they have a new election, for as some go out, others come in. This works out very badly, with great losses and gaps in the quotas of Indians, the villages being depopulated; and this gives rise to great extortions and abuses on the part of the inspectors toward the poor Indians, ruining them and thus depriving the . . . chief Indians of their property and carrying them off in chains because they do not fill out the mita assignment, which they cannot

⁶A measure of weight equaling anywhere from 100 to 130 pounds.

⁷A district military leader.

⁸This region consisted of approximately 139 Indian villages.

⁹ Literally "the royal deputy," he was appointed by the Crown to serve as chief military and civil administrator over a vast region.

do, for the reason given and for others which I do not bring forward.

These 13,300 are divided up every 4 months into 3 mitas, each consisting of 4,433 Indians, to work in the mines on the range and in the 120 smelters in the Potosí and Tarapaya areas; it is a good league¹⁰ between the two. These mita Indians earn each day, or there is paid each one for his labor, 4 reals.¹¹ Besides these there are others not under obligation, who are mingados or hire themselves out voluntarily: these each get from 12 to 16 reals, and some up to 24, according to their reputation of wielding the pick and knowing how to get the ore out. These mingados will be over 4,000 in number. They and the mita Indians go up every Monday morning to the locality of Guayna Potosí which is at the foot of the range; the Corregidor arrives with all the provincial captains or chiefs who have charge of the Indians assigned them, and he there checks off and reports to each mine and smelter owner the number of Indians assigned him for his mine or smelter; that keeps him busy till 1 P.M., by which time the Indians are already turned over to these mine and smelter owners.

After each has eaten his ration, they climb up the hill, each to his mine, and go in, staying there from that hour until Saturday evening without coming out of the mine; their wives bring them food, but they stay constantly underground, excavating and carrying out the ore from which they get the silver. They all have tallow candles, lighted day and night; that is the light they work with, for as they are underground, they have need of it all the time. The mere cost of these candles used in the mines on this range will amount every year to more than 300,000 pesos, even though tallow is cheap in that country, being abundant; but this is a very great expense, and it is almost incredible, how much is spent for candles in the operation of breaking down and getting out the ore.

These Indians have different functions in the handling of the silver ore; some break it up with bar or pick, and dig down in, following the vein in the mine; others bring it up; others up above keep separating the good and the poor in piles; others are occupied in taking it down from the range to the mills on herds of llamas; every day they bring up more than 8,000 of these native beasts of burden for this task. These teamsters who carry the metal do not belong to the mita, but are mingados — hired.

So huge is the wealth which has been taken out of this range since the year 1545, when it was discovered, up to the present year of 1628, which makes 83 years that they have been working and reducing its ores, that merely from the registered mines, as appears from an examination of most of the accounts in the royal records, 326,000,000 assay pesos have been taken out. At the beginning when the ore was richer and easier to get out, for then there were no mita Indians and no mercury process, in the 40 years between 1545 and 1585, they took out 111,000,000 of assay silver. From the year 1585 up to 1628, 43 years, although the mines are harder to work, for they are deeper down, with the assistance of 13,300 Indians whom His Majesty has granted to the mine owners on that range, and of other hired Indians, who come there freely and voluntarily to work at day's wages, and with the great advantage of the mercury process, in which none of the ore or the silver is wasted, and with the better knowledge of the technique which the miners now have, they have taken out 215,000,000 assay pesos. That, plus the 111 extracted in the 40 years previous to 1585, makes 326,000,000 assay pesos, not counting the great amount of silver secretly taken from these mines . . . to Spain, paying no 20 percent or registry fee,¹² and to other countries outside Spain; and to the Philippines and China, which is beyond

¹⁰A league is three miles.

¹¹A Spanish silver coin (see note 2).

¹²The 20 percent registry fee was the royal tax on all New World silver.

all reckoning; but I should venture to imagine and even assert that what has been taken from the Potosí range must be as much again as what paid the 20 percent royal impost.

Over and above that, such great treasure and riches have come from the Indies in gold and

silver from all the other mines in New Spain and Peru, Honduras, the New Kingdom of Granada, Chile, New Galicia, New Vizcaya,¹³ and other quarters since the discovery of the Indies, that they exceed 1,800 millions.

¹³New Galicia and New Vizcaya were regions and administrative jurisdictions in New Spain located in north-central and northwestern Mexico.

African Reactions to the European Presence

Due mainly to the catastrophic decline of the Amerindian population, Spanish and Portuguese colonists increasingly turned to African slaves for labor in the sixteenth century. Portugal, which had begun to explore the west coast of Africa in 1418, was initially in an advantageous position to supply this human chattel. During the 1480s the Portuguese established fortified posts along West Africa's Gold Coast, where it traded with such coastal kingdoms as Benin for gold, slaves, and ivory. By 1500 some seven hundred kilos of gold and approximately ten thousand slaves were arriving annually in Lisbon from West Africa. While engaging in this trade, the Portuguese were also pushing down the coast. Finally, in 1487–1488 Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope, opening the east coast of Africa to direct Portuguese contact. Under the leadership of Francisco de Almeida (ca. 1450–1510), the Portuguese set up fortified trading posts along Africa's east coast, thereby successfully challenging Arab hegemony over East African trade.

The Portuguese led the way, but other European maritime powers were not far behind in establishing their presence in Africa. While the Spaniards concentrated on North Africa, capturing Tunis in 1535 and holding it until 1574, the English under John Hawkins instituted their own slave trade from West Africa to the New World between 1562 and 1568. After 1713, when England won the right of *asiento*, by which it was granted license to transport African slaves to the Spanish Americas, the English came to dominate the African slave trade. In 1595 the Dutch began to trade on the Guinea coast, and in 1652 they founded Cape Town on the southern tip of the continent. The first French forts in Africa appeared in 1626 on the island of Madagascar, which France annexed in 1686, and by 1637 the French were building numerous forts on West Africa's Gold Coast and exploring Senegal. Even the Prussians had a minor presence in West Africa by 1683.

Slaves and gold were the two major attractions for all these European powers on the African coasts, and many Africans were quite willing to deal in these commodities with the outside world. Arab and Berber traders had already been

crossing the Sahara for centuries to purchase the goods of inner Africa, including millions of slaves. European merchants now simply opened a new door — a coastal door — to this lucrative, long-booming market.

Although Europeans were becoming a major presence along the coasts, their penetration of the interior would have to wait for a later age. The general social and political strength of most African regional kingdoms, the wide variety of debilitating and often deadly African diseases, against which Europeans had no immunities, and the absence of safe and fast inland transportation combined to block significant European thrust into the interior until the nineteenth century. The Europeans were thus forced to come largely as traders and not colonizers, and they had to negotiate with local African leaders for goods and slaves.

An African Voice of Ambivalence?



114 ▼ *Nzinga Mbemba (Afonso I),* *LETTERS TO THE KING OF PORTUGAL*

The largest state in central West Africa by 1500 was the kingdom of Kongo, stretching along the estuary of the Congo River in territory that today lies within the nations of Angola and Zaire. In 1483 the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão made contact with Kongo and several years later visited its inland capital. When he sailed home he brought with him Kongo emissaries, whom King Nzinga a Kuwu dispatched to Lisbon to learn European ways. They returned in 1491, accompanied by Portuguese priests, artisans, and soldiers, who brought with them a wide variety of European goods, including a printing press. In the same year, the king and his son, Nzinga Mbemba, were baptized into the Catholic faith.

Around 1506 Nzinga Mbemba, whose Christian name was *Afonso*, succeeded his father and ruled until about 1543. Afonso promoted the introduction of European culture into his kingdom by adopting Christianity as the state religion (although most of his subjects, especially those in the hinterlands, remained followers of the ancient ways), imitating the etiquette of the Portuguese royal court, and using Portuguese as the language of state business. His son Henrique was educated in Portugal and returned to serve as West Africa's first native-born Roman Catholic bishop. European firearms, horses, and cattle, as well as new foods from the Americas, became common in Kongo, and Afonso dreamed of achieving a powerful and prosperous state through cooperation with the Europeans. By the time of his death, however, his kingdom was on the verge of disintegration, in no small measure because of the Portuguese. As many later African rulers were to discover, the introduction of European products and customs caused dissension and instability. Worse yet, Portuguese involvement in the slave trade undermined Afonso's authority and made his subjects restive.

In 1526 King Afonso wrote the following three letters to King João III of Portugal. The three documents are part of a collection of twenty-four letters that Afonso and his Portuguese-educated native secretaries dispatched to two succes-

sive kings of Portugal on a variety of issues. This collection is our earliest extant source of African commentary on the European impact.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to King Afonso, what have been the detrimental effects of the Portuguese presence in his kingdom?
2. What do the letters reveal about the mechanics of the slave trade in the kingdom? Who participated in it?
3. What do the letters reveal about King Afonso's attitude toward slavery? Was he opposed to the practice in its entirety or only certain aspects of it?
4. What steps has the king taken to deal with the problems caused by the Portuguese? What do the letters suggest about the effectiveness of these steps?
5. How would you characterize Afonso's attitude toward the power and authority of the king of Portugal? Does he consider himself inferior to the Portuguese king or his equal?
6. Based on this evidence, what do you conclude was King Afonso's conception of the ideal relationship between the Portuguese and his kingdom?

JULY 6, 1526

Sir, Your Highness should know how our Kingdom is being lost in so many ways that it is convenient to provide for the necessary remedy, since this is caused by the excessive freedom given by your agents and officials to the men and merchants who are allowed to come to this Kingdom to set up shops with goods and many things which have been prohibited by us, and which they spread throughout our Kingdoms and Domains in such an abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in obedience, do not comply because they have the things in greater abundance than we ourselves; and it was with these things that we had them content and subjected under our vassalage and jurisdiction, so it is doing a great harm not only to the service of God, but the security and peace of our Kingdoms and State as well.

And we cannot reckon how great the damage is, since the mentioned merchants are taking

every day our natives, sons of the land and the sons of our noblemen and vassals and our relatives, because the thieves and men of bad conscience grab them wishing to have the things and wares of this Kingdom which they are ambitious of; they grab them and get them to be sold; and so great, Sir, is the corruption and licentiousness that our country is being completely depopulated, and Your Highness should not agree with this nor accept it as in your service. And to avoid it we need from those (your) Kingdoms no more than some priests and a few people to teach in schools, and no other goods except wine and flour for the holy sacrament. That is why we beg of Your Highness to help and assist us in this matter, commanding your factors that they should not send here either merchants or wares, because it is *our will that in these Kingdoms there should not be any trade of slaves nor outlet for them*.¹ Concerning what is referred [to] above, again we beg of Your Highness to agree with it, since otherwise we cannot remedy such an obvi-

¹The emphasis appears in the original letter.

ous damage. Pray Our Lord in His mercy to have Your Highness under His guard and let you do forever the things of His service. I kiss your hands many times.

At our town of Kongo, written on the sixth day of July, João Teixeira did it² in 1526.

The King. Dom³ Affonso.

{On the back of this letter the following can be read:

To the most powerful and excellent prince Dom João, King our Brother.}

UNDATED

Moreover, Sir, in our Kingdoms there is another great inconvenience which is of little service to God, and this is that many of our people, keenly desirous as they are of the wares and things of your Kingdoms, which are brought here by your people, and in order to satisfy their voracious appetite, seize many of our people, freed and exempt men, and very often it happens that they kidnap even noblemen and the sons of noblemen, and our relatives, and take them to be sold to the white men who are in our Kingdoms; and for this purpose they have concealed them; and others are brought during the night so that they might not be recognized.

And as soon as they are taken by the white men they are immediately ironed and branded with fire, and when they are carried to be embarked, if they are caught by our guards' men the whites allege that they have bought them but they cannot say from whom, so that it is our duty to do justice and to restore to the freemen their freedom, but it cannot be done if your subjects feel offended, as they claim to be.

And to avoid such a great evil we passed a law so that any white man living in our Kingdoms and wanting to purchase goods in any way should first inform three of our noblemen and officials

of our court whom we rely upon in this matter, and these are Dom Pedro Manipanza and Dom Manuel Manissaba, our chief usher, and Gonçalo Pires our chief freighter, who should investigate if the mentioned goods are captives⁴ or free men, and if cleared by them there will be no further doubt nor embargo for them to be taken and embarked. But if the white men do not comply with it they will lose the aforementioned goods. And if we do them this favor and concession it is for the part Your Highness has in it, since we know that it is in your service too that these goods are taken from our Kingdom, otherwise we should not consent to this. . . .

OCTOBER 18, 1526

Sir, Your Highness has been kind enough to write to us saying that we should ask in our letters for anything we need, and that we shall be provided with everything, and as the peace and the health of our Kingdom depend on us, and as there are among us old folks and people who have lived for many days, it happens that we have continuously many and different diseases which put us very often in such a weakness that we reach almost the last extreme; and the same happens to our children, relatives and natives owing to the lack in this country of physicians and surgeons who might know how to cure properly such diseases. And as we have got neither dispensaries nor drugs which might help us in this forlornness, many of those who had been already confirmed and instructed in the holy faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ perish and die; and the rest of the people in their majority cure themselves with herbs and breads and other ancient methods, so that they put all their faith in the mentioned herbs and ceremonies if they live, and believe that they are saved if they die; and this is not much in the service of God.

²That is, wrote the letter. João Teixeira was probably a Kongo-born secretary who had been baptized and educated by Portuguese missionaries.

³Portuguese for "lord."

⁴Captives taken by King Afonso in his wars of expansion (made possible by Portuguese firearms) were sold into slavery.

And to avoid such a great error and inconvenience, since it is from God in the first place and then from your Kingdoms and from Your Highness that all the good and drugs and medicines have come to save us, we beg of you to be agreeable and kind enough to send us two physicians and two apothecaries and one surgeon, so that they may come with their drugstores and all the necessary things to stay in our kingdoms, be-

cause we are in extreme need of them all and each of them. We shall do them all good and shall benefit them by all means, since they are sent by Your Highness, whom we thank for your work in their coming. We beg of Your Highness as a great favor to do this for us, because besides being good in itself it is in the service of God as we have said above.

Images of the Portuguese in the Art of Benin



115 ▼ *A BENIN-PORTUGUESE SALTCELLAR and A BENIN WALL PLAQUE*

Over many centuries sub-Saharan Africans have produced some of the world's most impressive art works, especially sculptures. Since at least 500 B.C.E., West African sculptors used clay, wood, ivory, and bronze to create a wide variety of works — masks, animal figures, ceremonial weapons, religious objects, and images of rulers and other important people — that were of central importance to their various cultures. In some regions bronze casting and ivory carving were royal monopolies carried on by highly trained professionals.

Such was the case in the kingdom of Benin, located on the west coast of tropical Africa in an area that today is part of Nigeria. The kingdom, created by a people known as the *Edo*, took shape around 1300, when a number of agricultural villages accepted the authority of an *oba*, or divine king, who ruled with a hierarchy of chiefs from the capital, Benin City. By the time the Portuguese arrived in 1485 Benin was a formidable military and commercial power and also a center of state-sponsored artistic activity. Ivory carvers and bronze casters were organized into hereditary guilds and resided in neighborhoods set aside for them in Benin City. They produced bronze heads, animal and human figures, pendants, plaques, musical instruments, drinking vessels, and armlets, all of which were used by their society's elites for ceremonial and personal purposes or were exchanged in trade.

The arrival of the Portuguese affected Benin's artistic development in two important ways. First, Portuguese merchants, unable to establish Benin as a major source of slaves, turned to other commodities, including art works, as objects of trade. Benin ivory carvers received numerous commissions from Portuguese merchants to produce condiment sets, utensils, and hunting horns for sale in Europe. Second, the Portuguese also stimulated the production of art works for use in Benin itself by providing Benin artists through trade an increased supply of copper, which was used in the alloys that were turned into plaques and sculptures.

The two works produced in this section provide an opportunity to appreciate the high quality of Benin art and to make some inferences about the attitudes of the people of Benin toward Europeans. The first item is an ivory carving crafted in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century and usually identified as a *salario*, or saltcellar. It depicts two Portuguese officials, flanked by two assistants. Above them is a Portuguese ship, with a man peering out of a crow's nest.

The second work, which also dates from the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, is a copper plaque, approximately eighteen inches high and designed to be hung on a wall in the oba's palace in Benin City. (We can see the holes on the top and bottom of the plaque where it was attached.) The central figure is the oba, shown holding a spear and shield. To his right stand two attendants. The one farther away holds a C-shaped iron bar, which was used as currency in trade; the figure closer to the oba holds an *eban*, a ceremonial sword. To the oba's left stands another attendant playing a flutelike musical instrument. The two figures in the background, on each side of the oba's head, represent the Portuguese. In one hand each figure holds a rectangular object, perhaps a glass mirror, and in the other hand what appears to be a goblet. Most experts believe these objects represent items the Portuguese offered in trade for the goods of Benin.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In the saltcellar, notice what hangs around the standing figure's neck, what he holds in his hands, and his facial expression. What is the sculptor trying to communicate?
2. Why might this image of the Portuguese official have appealed to the European purchasers for whom the work was intended?
3. Consider the second item. What distinguishes the oba from the other figures in the plaque? Which details illustrate the oba's power and perhaps his divinity?
4. How does the representation of the Portuguese in the plaque differ from that of the saltcellar?
5. Compare the representation of the Portuguese official in the saltcellar with that of the oba in the plaque. Which strike you as more significant, the similarities or the differences? What inferences do you draw from your answer?
6. What might we infer from these works about Portuguese-Benin relations and the attitudes of the people of Benin toward the Portuguese?



A Benin-Portuguese Saltcellar



A Benin Wall Plaque

The Economics of the West African Slave Trade



116 ▼ *James Barbot,* *A VOYAGE TO NEW CALABAR RIVER* *IN THE YEAR 1699*

Source 114 illustrates how an African king's attempt to control commerce between his subjects and the Portuguese was at least partially frustrated and how the slave trade had a number of tragic consequences for African society. This source offers another perspective. James Barbot, a French member of a late-seventeenth-century English slave-trading expedition to Ibani, describes trade negotiations with its king, William, in 1699. Ibani, or *Bonny*, as the English called it, was an island state in the Niger Delta. By the late eighteenth century it was the principal slave market of the entire Guinea coast. One English captain, who sailed to Bonny between 1786 and 1800, estimated that at least twenty thousand slaves were bought and sold there annually. In this document we see how the trading system worked a century earlier.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How would you characterize trade at Bonny? Was it haphazard bartering? A well-developed system with specific currency? Something else?
2. How did the English benefit from the way in which trade was conducted?
3. What benefits did the king enjoy from this arrangement?
4. What was Barbot's attitude toward Ibani society?
5. How did the Ibani seem to regard the English?
6. What do the prices of the other commodities purchased by the English say about the relative value of one slave?
7. Who was the exploiter, and who was the exploited?
8. What does this account reveal about social structure in Ibani?

June 30, 1699, being ashore, had a new conference which produced nothing. Then Pepprell [Pepple], the king's brother, delivered a message from the king:

He was sorry we would not accept his proposals. It was not his fault, since he had a great esteem and regard for the whites, who had greatly enriched him through trade. His in-

sistence on thirteen bars¹ for male and ten for female slaves was due to the fact that the people of the country maintained a high price for slaves at their inland markets, seeing so many large ships coming to Bonny for them. However, to moderate matters and to encourage trade with us, he would be content with thirteen bars for males and nine bars and two brass rings for females, etc.

¹Bars of iron. See source 115.

We offered thirteen bars for men and nine for women and proportionately for boys and girls, according to their ages. Following this we parted, without concluding anything further.

On July 1, the king sent for us to come ashore. We stayed there till four in the afternoon and concluded the trade on the terms offered them the day before. The king promised to come aboard the next day to regulate it and be paid his duties. . . .

The second [of July]. . . . At two o'clock we fetched the king from shore, attended by all his *Caboceiros*² and officers, in three large canoes. Entering the ship, he was saluted with seven guns. The king had on an old-fashioned scarlet coat, laced with gold and silver, very rusty, and a fine hat on his head, but bare-footed. All his attendants showed great respect to him and, since our arrival, none of the natives have dared to come aboard or sell the least thing, till the king adjusted trade matters.

We had again a long talk with the king and Pepprell, his brother, concerning the rates of our goods and his customs. This Pepprell was a sharp black and a mighty talking black, perpetually making objections against something or other and teasing us for this or that *dassy*³ or present, as well as for drinks, etc. Would that such a one as he were out of the way, to facilitate trade. . . .

Thus, with much patience, all our affairs were settled equitably, after the fashion of a people who are not very scrupulous when it comes to finding excuses or objections for not keeping to the word of any verbal contract. For they do not

have the art of reading and writing, and we therefore are forced to stand to their agreement, which often is no longer than they think fit to hold it themselves. The king ordered the public crier to proclaim permission to trade with us, with the noise of his trumpets. . . , we paying sixteen brass rings to the fellow for his fee. The blacks objected against our wrought pewter and tankards, green beads, and other goods, which they would not accept. . . .

We gave the usual presents to the king. . . . To Captain Forty, the king's general, Captain Pepprell, Captain Boileau, alderman Bougsbyu, my lord Willyby, duke of Monmouth, drunken Henry, and some others⁴ two firelocks, eight hats, nine narrow Guinea stuffs. We adjusted with them the reduction of our merchandise into bars of iron, as the standard coin, namely: one bunch of beads, one bar; four strings of rings, ten rings each, one ditto; four copper bars, one ditto. . . . And so on *pro rata* for every sort of goods. . . .

The price of provisions and wood was also regulated. Sixty king's yams, one bar; one hundred and sixty slave's yams, one bar; for fifty thousand yams to be delivered to us. A butt⁵ of water, two rings. For the length of wood, seven bars, which is dear, but they were to deliver it ready cut into our boat. For one goat, one bar. A cow, ten or eight bars, according to its size. A hog, two bars. A calf, eight bars. A jar of palm oil, one bar and a quarter.

We also paid the king's duty in goods; five hundred slaves, to be purchased at two copper rings a head.

²A Portuguese term. Here it means "chiefs and elders."

³A trade term meaning "gift."

⁴The king's chiefs and elders.

⁵A large cask.

Chinese and Japanese Reactions to the West

China and Japan were no exception to the rule that most societies in Asia and Africa were able to successfully resist European efforts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to impose trade on Western terms and Christianity. Although ultimately rebuffed by the Chinese and Japanese, European merchants and missionaries nonetheless had good reason to believe during the sixteenth century that their labors in East Asia would be richly rewarded.

Portuguese traders reached south China in 1513, opened trade at Guangzhou (Canton) in 1514, and established a permanent trading base in Macao in 1557. In 1542 the first Portuguese merchants reached Japan and soon were reaping healthy profits by carrying goods between China and Japan. Later in the century the Dutch and English successfully entered these East Asian markets. Roman Catholic Europeans, especially the Portuguese, energetically supported missionary efforts in China and Japan, usually in cooperation with the newly founded Society of Jesus, more popularly known as the *Jesuits*. Francis Xavier and other Jesuits began preaching in Japan in 1549, and by the early 1600s they had won approximately three hundred thousand converts to Christianity. Catholic missionary activities in China began later in 1583 and followed a somewhat different strategy: The Jesuits did less preaching to the common people and instead sought the support of Chinese intellectuals, government officials, and members of the imperial court. The Jesuits were moderately successful because they impressed Confucian scholars with their erudition, especially in mathematics and science, and the Chinese appreciated the missionaries' willingness to understand and respect China's culture.

For all their efforts, the economic benefits and religious gains the Westerners obtained were meager. Although the Chinese tolerated learned Jesuit missionaries, they viewed European merchants as boorish, overly aggressive, and purveyors of shoddy goods. Preferring to deal with Arabs and other foreigners, they limited trade with Europeans to Guangzhou and Macao and placed it under numerous restrictions. Missionary activity resulted in a few converts, but feuding among Catholic religious orders, staunch opposition from many Chinese officials, and the unwillingness of most Chinese, even converts, to abandon such ancient rites as ancestor worship weakened the enterprise. When in 1742 Pope Benedict XIV decreed that Chinese Catholics must abandon Confucianism, Emperor Qianlong expelled the missionaries and Chinese Christianity withered.

Although European efforts to win souls and trade had a more promising start in Japan, by the mid seventeenth century the Japanese had suppressed Christianity and restricted European trade to only one Dutch ship a year. This turn of events resulted from attempts by Japanese leaders to bring stability to Japan after a century of civil war and rebellion. Convinced that European merchants and missionaries had contributed to Japan's disorder, the government outlawed Christianity and essentially closed Japan to the outside world.

The Jesuits in China



117 ▼ Matteo Ricci, JOURNALS

The most celebrated of the Jesuit scholar-missionaries to work in China was the Italian Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), who arrived in 1583. Father Ricci dazzled the Chinese literarchy with clocks, maps, and various types of scientific equipment, much of which he constructed himself. A gifted linguist, he composed over twenty-five works in Chinese on mathematics, literature, ethics, geography, astronomy, and, above all else, religion. He so impressed Confucian scholars that they accorded him the title *Doctor from the Great West Ocean*. In 1601 Emperor Wanli summoned Ricci to his court at Beijing and provided him with a subsidy to carry on his study of mathematics and astronomy. When Ricci died, the emperor donated a burial site outside the gates of the imperial city as a special token of honor.

During his twenty-seven years in China, Ricci kept a journal, with no thought of publishing it. Shortly after his death, however, a Jesuit colleague edited and published the journal, into which he incorporated a number of other, more official sources, and it became one of Europe's primary stores of information about China until the late eighteenth century, when accounts by European travelers to the Middle Kingdom became more common. In the following selection from that diary, Ricci tells of charges brought against certain Jesuits working at Nanchang. Here we can see some of the cultural barriers and attitudes that frustrated the Jesuits' efforts to accommodate Christianity to Chinese civilization.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What most offended the Confucians who brought charges against the Jesuits and their religion?
2. The Jesuits' association with Father Ricci seems to have favored them in the course of events. Why? What was there about Ricci that gave his Jesuit colleagues an aura of legitimacy?
3. Why did Ricci view the outcome as a Christian victory?
4. How do you think the Jesuits' Confucian opponents saw this confrontation and its resolution?
5. Imagine you are the Chief Justice, and you are preparing a report to the imperial court concerning your decision, the reasoning behind it, and what you believe will be its consequences. Compose that report.
6. Compare the charges brought against the Jesuits with Han Yu's *Memorial on Buddhism* and Emperor Tang Wuzong's *Proclamation Ordering the Destruction of the Buddhist Monasteries* (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 73). Which are more striking, the differences or the similarities? What do you conclude from your answer?

During 1606 and the year following, the progress of Christianity in Nanchang¹ was in no wise retarded. . . . The number of neophytes² increased by more than two hundred, all of whom manifested an extraordinary piety in their religious devotions. As a result, the reputation of the Christian religion became known throughout the length and breadth of this metropolitan city. . . .

Through the efforts of Father Emanuele Dias another and a larger house was purchased, in August of 1607, at a price of a thousand gold pieces. This change was necessary, because the house he had was too small for his needs and was situated in a flood area. Just as the community was about to change from one house to the other, a sudden uprising broke out against them. . . .

At the beginning of each month, the Magistrates hold a public assembly . . . in the temple of their great Philosopher.³ When the rites of the new-moon were completed in the temple, and these are civil rather than religious rites,⁴ one of those present took advantage of the occasion to speak on behalf of the others, and to address the highest Magistrate present. . . . "We wish to warn you," he said, "that there are certain foreign priests in this royal city, who are preaching a law, hitherto unheard of in this kingdom,⁵ and who are holding large gatherings of people in their house." Having said this, he referred them to their local Magistrate, . . . and he in turn ordered the plaintiffs to present their case in writing, assuring them that he would support it with all his authority, in an effort to have the foreign priests expelled. The complaint was written out that same day and signed with twenty-seven signatures. . . . The content of the document was somewhat as follows.

Matthew Ricci, Giovanni Soerio, Emanuele Dias, and certain other foreigners from western kingdoms, men who are guilty of high treason against the throne, are scattered amongst us, in five different provinces. They are continually communicating with each other and are here and there practicing brigandage on the rivers, collecting money, and then distributing it to the people, in order to curry favor with the multitudes. They are frequently visited by the Magistrates, by the high nobility and by the Military Prefects, with whom they have entered into a secret pact, binding unto death.

These men teach that we should pay no respect to the images of our ancestors, a doctrine which is destined to extinguish the love of future generations for their forebears. Some of them break up the idols, leaving the temples empty and the gods to be pitied, without any patronage. In the beginning they lived in small houses, but by this time they have bought up large and magnificent residences. The doctrine they teach is something infernal. It attracts the ignorant into its fraudulent meshes, and great crowds of this class are continually assembled at their houses. Their doctrine gets beyond the city walls and spreads itself through the neighboring towns and villages and into the open country, and the people become so wrapt up in its falsity, that students are not following their course, laborers are neglecting their work, farmers are not cultivating their acres, and even the women have no interest in their housework. The whole city has become disturbed, and, whereas in the beginning there were only a hundred or so professing their faith, now there are more than

¹Nanchang, in the southern province of Kiangsi.

²New converts.

³Confucius.

⁴Ricci and his fellow Jesuits chose to regard all Confucian ceremonies, including those that honored the spirits of ancestors, as purely *civil rites*, rather than religious observances.

This allowed their converts to Catholic Christianity to continue to pay traditional devotion to deceased family members.

⁵Ricci (or his editor) consistently refers to China as a *kingdom*, even though it had an emperor, not a king.

twenty thousand. These priests distribute pictures of some Tartar or Saracen,⁶ who they say is God, who came down from heaven to redeem and to instruct all of humanity, and who alone, according to their doctrine, can give wealth and happiness; a doctrine by which the simple people are very easily deceived. These men are an abomination on the face of the earth, and there is just ground for fear that once they have erected their own temples, they will start a rebellion. . . . Wherefore, moved by their interest in the maintenance of the public good, in the conservation of the realm, and in the preservation, whole and entire, of their ancient laws, the petitioners are presenting this complaint and demanding, in the name of the entire province, that a rescript of it be forwarded to the King, asking that these foreigners be sentenced to death, or banished from the realm, to some deserted island in the sea. . . .

Each of the Magistrates to whom the indictment was presented asserted that the spread of Christianity should be prohibited, and that the foreign priests should be expelled from the city, if the Mayor saw fit, after hearing the case, and notifying the foreigners. . . . But the Fathers,⁷ themselves, were not too greatly disturbed, placing their confidence in Divine Providence, which had always been present to assist them on other such dangerous occasions.

▷ Father Emanuele is summoned before the Chief Justice.

Father Emanuele, in his own defense, . . . gave a brief outline of the Christian doctrine. Then

he showed that according to the divine law, the first be honored, after God, were a man's parents. But the judge had no mind to hear or to accept any of this and he made it known that he thought it was all false. After that repulse, with things going from bad to worse, it looked as if they were on the verge of desperation, so much so, indeed, that they increased their prayers, their sacrifices, and their bodily penances, in petition for a favorable solution of their difficulty. Their adversaries appeared to be triumphantly victorious. They were already wrangling about the division of the furniture of the Mission residences, and to make results doubly certain, they stirred up the flames anew with added accusations and indictments. . . .

The Mayor, who was somewhat friendly with the Fathers, realizing that there was much in the accusation that was patently false, asked the Magistrate Director of the Schools,⁸ if he knew whether or not this man Emanuele was a companion of Matthew Ricci, who was so highly respected at the royal court, and who was granted a subsidy from the royal treasury, because of the gifts he had presented to the King. Did he realize that the Fathers had lived in Nankin⁹ for twelve years, and that no true complaint had ever been entered against them for having violated the laws. Then he asked him if he had really given full consideration as to what was to be proven in the present indictment. To this the Director of the Schools replied that he wished the Mayor to make a detailed investigation of the case and then to confer with him. The Chief Justice then ordered the same thing to be done. Fortunately, it was this same Justice who was in charge of city affairs when Father Ricci first arrived in Nancian. It was he who first gave the Fathers permission, with the authority of the Viceroy, to open a house there. . . .

⁶The reference is to Jesus Christ.

⁷The Jesuit fathers, or priests.

⁸The director of the local Confucian academy was one of the Jesuits' chief opponents.

⁹Nanjing, the southern auxiliary capital.

After the Mayor had examined the charges of the plaintiffs and the reply of the defendants, he subjected the quasi-literati¹⁰ to an examination in open court, and taking the Fathers under his patronage, he took it upon himself to refute the calumnies of their accusers. He said he was fully convinced that these strangers were honest men, and that he knew that there were only two of them in their local residence and not twenty, as had been asserted. To this they replied that the Chinese were becoming their disciples. To which the Justice in turn replied: "What of it? Why should we be afraid of our own people? Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that Matthew Ricci's company is cultivated by everyone in Peking,¹¹ and that he is being subsidized by the royal treasury. How dare the Magistrates who are living outside of the royal city expel men who have permission to live at the royal court? These men here have lived peacefully in Nankin for twelve years. I command," he added, "that they buy no more large houses, and that the people are not to follow their law." . . .

A few days later, the court decision was pronounced and written out . . . and was then posted at the city gates as a public edict. The following is a summary of their declaration. Having examined the cause of Father Emanuele and his companions, it was found that these men had come here from the West because they had heard so much about the fame of the great Chinese Empire, and that they had already been living in the realm for some years, without any display of ill-will. Father Emanuele should be permitted to practice his own religion, but it was not considered to be the right thing for the common people, who are attracted by novelties, to adore the God of Heaven. For them to go over to the

religion of foreigners would indeed be most unbecoming. . . . It would therefore seem to be . . . [in] . . . the best interests of the Kingdom, to . . . [warn] . . . everyone in a public edict not to abandon the sacrifices of their ancient religion by accepting the cult of foreigners. Such a movement might, indeed, result in calling together certain gatherings, detrimental to the public welfare, and harmful also to the foreigner, himself. Wherefore, the Governor of this district, by order of the high Magistrates, admonishes the said Father Emanuele to refrain from perverting the people, by inducing them to accept a foreign religion. The man who sold him the larger house is to restore his money and Emanuele is to buy a smaller place, sufficient for his needs, and to live there peaceably, as he has done, up to the present. Emanuele, himself, has agreed to these terms and the Military Prefects of the district have been ordered to make a search of the houses there and to confiscate the pictures of the God they speak of, wherever they find them. It is not permitted for any of the native people to go over to the religion of the foreigners, nor is it permitted to gather together for prayer meetings. Whoever does contrary to these prescriptions will be severely punished, and if the Military Prefects are remiss in enforcing them, they will be held to be guilty of the same crimes. To his part of the edict, the Director of the Schools added, that the common people were forbidden to accept the law of the foreigners, and that a sign should be posted above the door of the Father's residence, notifying the public that these men were forbidden to have frequent contact with the people.

The Fathers were not too disturbed by this pronouncement, because they were afraid that it was going to be much worse. In fact, everyone

¹⁰Those who are almost educated or educated to a limited degree. This is Ricci's term for the chief tormenters of the Jesuits in Nanchang. They were Confucian scholars who had passed the first and most basic of the three Confucian civil service examinations and thereby earned the title *Cultivated Talents*. By passing the first examination level, they earned recognition simply as competent students. Hence, Ricci dismisses them as quasi-literati. Cultivated Talents

were subject to periodic re-examination at that level and could lose their status and privileges. Only scholars who passed the second, or provincial, level examination and became *Elevated Men*, attained a permanent rank and were eligible for appointment to one of the lower civil posts. Apparently the Cultivated Talents felt threatened by the Jesuits.

¹¹Beijing, the Ming capital.

thought it was rather favorable, and that the injunction launched against the spread of the faith was a perfunctory order to make it appear that the literati were not wholly overlooked, since the Fathers were not banished from the city, as the literati had demanded. Moreover it was not con-

sidered a grave misdemeanor for the Chinese to change their religion, and it was not customary to inflict a serious punishment on those violating such an order. The neophytes, themselves, proved this when they continued, as formerly, to attend Mass.

The Seclusion of Japan



118 ▼ Tokugawa Iemitsu, CLOSED COUNTRY EDICT OF 1635 and EXCLUSION OF THE PORTUGUESE, 1639

When the first Europeans reached Japan, they encountered a land plagued by civil war and rebellion. The authority of the *shoguns*, military commanders who had ruled Japan on behalf of the emperor since the twelfth century, was in eclipse, as the *daimyo* (great lords) fought for power. Turbulence ended toward the close of the sixteenth century, when three military heroes — Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) — forced the daimyo to accept central authority. In 1603 the emperor recognized Tokugawa Ieyasu as shogun; the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate, which lasted to 1868, had begun.

Between 1624 and 1641 Iemitsu, grandson of Ieyasu and shogun from 1623 to 1651, issued edicts that closed Japan to virtually all foreigners. This was the culmination of policies begun under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had sought to limit contacts between Japanese and foreigners, especially Catholic missionaries. He and his successors viewed the missionaries' aggressive proselytizing as a potential source of social unrest and rebellion. The first document that follows, the most celebrated of Tokugawa Iemitsu's edicts, is directed to the two *bugyo*, or commissioners, of Nagasaki, a port city in southwest Japan and a center of Japanese Christianity; the second more specifically deals with the missionary activities of the Portuguese.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. To what extent was the edict of 1635 directed against the activities of foreigners? To what extent was it directed against certain presumed antisocial activities by Japanese?
2. Much of the 1635 edict dealt with trade issues. What do the various trade provisions suggest about the shogun's attitude toward commerce?
3. What was the major purpose behind the 1635 edict?
4. What can you infer about the reasons for promulgating the 1639 edict?

CLOSED COUNTRY EDICT OF 1635

1. Japanese ships are strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries.
 2. No Japanese is permitted to go abroad. If there is anyone who attempts to do so secretly, he must be executed. The ship so involved must be impounded and its owner arrested, and the matter must be reported to the higher authority.
 3. If any Japanese returns from overseas after residing there, he must be put to death.
 4. If there is any place where the teachings of padres¹ is practiced, the two of you must order a thorough investigation.
 5. Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of padres must be rewarded accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking padre, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver. For those of lower ranks, depending on the deed, the reward must be set accordingly.
 6. If a foreign ship has an objection [to the measures adopted] and it becomes necessary to report the matter to Edo,² you may ask the Omura domain³ to provide ships to guard the foreign ship. . . .
 7. If there are any Southern Barbarians⁴ who propagate the teachings of padres, or otherwise commit crimes, they may be incarcerated in the prison. . . .
 8. All incoming ships must be carefully searched for the followers of padres.
 9. No single trading city shall be permitted to purchase all the merchandise brought by foreign ships.
 10. Samurai are not permitted to purchase any goods originating from foreign ships directly from Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.
 11. After a list of merchandise brought by foreign ships is sent to Edo, as before you may order that commercial dealings may take place without waiting for a reply from Edo.
 12. After settling the price, all white yarns⁵ brought by foreign ships shall be allocated to the five trading cities⁶ and other quarters as stipulated.
 13. After settling the price of white yarns, other merchandise [brought by foreign ships] may be traded freely between the [licensed] dealers. However, in view of the fact that Chinese ships are small and cannot bring large consignments, you may issue orders of sale at your discretion. Additionally, payment for goods purchased must be made within twenty days after the price is set.
 14. The date of departure homeward of foreign ships shall not be later than the twentieth day of the ninth month. Any ships arriving in Japan later than usual shall depart within fifty days of their arrival. As to the departure of Chinese ships, you may use your discretion to order their departure after the departure of the Portuguese *galeota*.⁷
 15. The goods brought by foreign ships which remained unsold may not be deposited or accepted for deposit.
 16. The arrival in Nagasaki of representatives of the five trading cities shall not be later than the fifth day of the seventh month. Anyone arriving later than that date shall lose the quota assigned to his city.
 17. Ships arriving in Hirado⁸ must sell their raw silk at the price set in Nagasaki, and are not permitted to engage in business transactions until after the price is established in Nagasaki.
- You are hereby required to act in accordance with the provisions set above. It is so ordered.

¹Fathers (Catholic priests).²Modern Tokyo, the seat of Tokugawa government.³The area around Nagasaki.⁴Westerners.⁵Raw silk.⁶The cities of Kyoto, Edo, Osaka, Sakai, and Nagasaki.⁷A *galleon*, an ocean-going Portuguese ship.⁸A small island in the southwest, not far from Nagasaki.

EXCLUSION OF THE PORTUGUESE, 1639

1. The matter relating to the proscription of Christianity is known [to the Portuguese]. However, heretofore they have secretly transported those who are going to propagate that religion.
2. If those who believe in that religion band together in an attempt to do evil things, they must be subjected to punishment.
3. While those who believe in the preaching of padres are in hiding, there are incidents in which that country [Portugal] has sent gifts to them for their sustenance.

In view of the above, hereafter entry by the Portuguese *galeota* is forbidden. If they insist on coming [to Japan], the ships must be destroyed and anyone aboard those ships must be beheaded.

We have received the above order and are thus transmitting it to you accordingly.

The above concerns our disposition with regard to the *galeota*.

Memorandum

With regard to those who believe in Christianity, you are aware that there is a proscription, and thus knowing, you are not permitted to let padres and those who believe in their preaching to come aboard your ships. If there is any violation, all of you who are aboard will be considered culpable. If there is anyone who hides the fact that he is a Christian and boards your ship, you may report it to us. A substantial reward will be given to you for this information.

This memorandum is to be given to those who come on Chinese ships. [A similar note to the Dutch ships.]

The Great Mughals and the West

Between 1526 and his death in 1530, the Turkish lord of Afghanistan, Babur, subdued north central India with a small, well-equipped army that enjoyed the advantage of firearms received from the Ottoman Turks. This new Muslim lord of Hindustan, a direct descendant of the Mongol Chinggis Khan and the Turk Timur the Lame, initiated India's *Mughal* (the Persian word for *Mongol*) Age and laid the base for the reign of his grandson Jalal ad-Din Akbar (r. 1556–1605), known to history as simply *Akbar* (the Great).

Akbar's empire encompassed only the northern half of the Indian subcontinent. His great-grandson Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), the last effective Mughal emperor, reigned over twice that amount of land, holding all the subcontinent except its southern tip and the island of Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka). Nevertheless, Akbar fully deserved to be known as the *Great Mughal*, a title awed European visitors to his court at Fatehpur-Sikri (the City of Victory) bestowed on him. From this court Akbar forged a centralized empire, which during his reign of more than a half century enjoyed prosperity and a fair level of peace between Hindus and Muslims. Although the Portuguese had established three major bases along the west Indian coast by 1535, Akbar was secure enough in his power to keep them and other Europeans at arm's length throughout the last half of the sixteenth century.

The European presence, however, increased in the seventeenth century. In 1603 the English East India Company — chartered on December 31, 1600, the last day

of the sixteenth century — sent its first envoy to Akbar's court.⁴ After defeating a Portuguese squadron in 1639, the English established their first trading station at Madras on India's east coast and in 1661 acquired Bombay on the west coast. As Portuguese influence in India declined, other European maritime powers secured trading privileges in the Mughal Empire. The Dutch acquired several important sites on both coasts between 1640 and 1663; in 1664 France founded an East India Company, and several French trading bases followed. In time, the Dutch shifted their focus away from India to the islands of Southeast Asia, leaving the French and English to fight for control of the Indian markets.

Despite all these late-seventeenth-century incursions along India's coasts, Emperor Aurangzeb was able to hold the West and its merchants at bay for the most part, even dealing the English a military setback in the 1680s. In 1700 the directors of the English East India Company rejected as unrealistic the notion of acquiring additional territory or establishing colonies in India. The decline of Mughal authority in the eighteenth century, however, changed the situation substantially, and toward midcentury the French and British were engaged in armed struggle for control of Indian territory.

Dealing with the Faringis



119 ▼ *Abu'l Fazl, AKBARNAMA*

Assisting Akbar in formulating and carrying out his largely successful policies of state was Abu'l Fazl (1551–1602), the emperor's chief advisor and confidant from 1579 until Abu'l Fazl's assassination at the instigation of Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627). Abu'l Fazl's death cut short his composition of the *Akbarnama*, a gigantic, laudatory history of Akbar's distinguished ancestors and the emperor's own reign. Before he was murdered, Abu'l Fazl carried his history to Akbar's forty-sixth year, creating a work universally regarded as one of the masterpieces of Mughal literature.

These thousands of pages of elegant Persian prose and poetry provide surprisingly few references to Akbar's or even India's relations with Europeans, or *Faringis* (Franks), as they were called at the Mughal court. This silence speaks eloquently of the level of early Mughal concern with these foreigners. The following excerpts constitute the work's major references to Europeans in India.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What aspects of European culture most fascinated Akbar?
2. What did he and Abu'l Fazl believe they could gain from the Faringis?
3. What did they believe they could offer the Europeans?
4. How did Akbar and Abu'l Fazl regard the Portuguese coastal bases?
5. What does the discussion with Padre Radif (Father Rodolfo) suggest about Akbar and Abu'l Fazl's attitudes toward the teachings of Europe's Christian missionaries?

6. Jesuit missionaries to Akbar's court often believed they were on the verge of converting him to Roman Catholicism. Why do you suppose they believed this? What evidence strongly indicates there was never any chance Akbar would become a Christian?
7. Compare these accounts of Muslim-Christian relations with the memoirs of Usamah (Chapter 9 Vol. A, source 77). Which strike you as more significant, the similarities or the differences? What do you conclude from your answer?

THE SIEGE OF SURAT

One of the occurrences of the siege¹ was that a large number of Christians came from the port of Goa² and its neighborhood to the foot of the sublime throne, and were rewarded by the bliss of an interview. Apparently they had come at the request of the besieged in order that the latter might make the fort over to them, and so convey themselves to the shore of safety. But when that crew saw the majesty of the imperial power, and had become cognizant of the largeness of the army, and of the extent of the siege-train they represented themselves as ambassadors and performed the *kornish*.³ They produced many of the rarities of their country, and the appreciative Khedive⁴ received each one of them with special favor and made inquiries about the wonders of Portugal and the manners and customs of Europe. It seemed as if he did this from a desire of knowledge, for his sacred heart is a storehouse of spiritual and physical sciences. But his . . . soul wished that these inquiries might be the means of civilizing this savage race.⁵

THE COMMODITIES OF GOA

One of the occurrences was the dispatch of Haji Habibu-llah Kashi to Goa. At the time when the country of Gujarat became included among the imperial dominions, and when many of the

ports of the country came into possession, and the governors of the European ports became submissive,⁶ many of the curiosities and rarities of the skilled craftsmen of that country became known to His Majesty. Accordingly the Haji,⁷ who for his skill, right thinking and powers of observation was one of the good servants of the court, was appointed to take with him a large sum of money, and the choice articles of India to Goa, and to bring for His Majesty's delectation the wonderful things of that country. There were sent with him clever craftsmen, who to ability and skill added industry, in order that just as the wonderful productions of that country [Goa and Europe] were being brought away, so also might rare crafts be imported [into Akbar's dominions].

THE MUSICIANS OF GOA

One of the occurrences was the arrival [at court] of Haji Habibu-llah. It has already been mentioned that he had been sent to the port of Goa with a large sum of money and skillful craftsmen in order that he might bring to his country the excellent arts and rarities of that place. On the 9th he came to do homage, attended by a large number of persons dressed up as Christians and playing European drums and clarions. He produced before His Majesty the choice articles of that territory. Craftsmen who had gone to ac-

¹The siege of the west coast port of Surat in 1573 during Akbar's campaign in Gujarat (note 6). This successful expedition gave Akbar access to the sea. Through his conquests Akbar more than tripled the empire he had inherited.

²The chief Portuguese stronghold in India since 1510.

³The act of obeisance.

⁴Akbar.

⁵The Portuguese.

⁶In 1573 Akbar conquered the northwest coastal region of Gujarat, where the Portuguese held the ports of Diu and Bassein. In theory, but not fact, these Portuguese bases were now under Akbar's control.

⁷Haji Habibu-llah. He bore the title *Haji* because he had completed the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca.

quire skill displayed the arts which they had learned and received praises in the critical place of testing. The musicians of that territory breathed fascination with the instruments of their country, especially with the organ. Ear and eye were delighted and so was the mind.

THURSDAY NIGHT AT THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP

One night, the assembly in the 'Ibadatkhana⁸ was increasing the light of truth. Padre Radif,⁹ one of the Nazarene¹⁰ sages, who was singular for his understanding and ability, was making points in that feast of intelligence. Some of the untruthful bigots¹¹ came forward in a blundering way to answer him. Owing to the calmness of the august assembly, and the increasing light of justice, it became clear that each of these was weaving a circle of old acquisitions, and was not following the highway of proof, and that the explanation of the riddle of truth was not present to their thoughts. The veil was nearly being stripped, once for all, from their procedure. They were ashamed, and abandoned such discourse, and applied themselves to perverting the words of the Gospels. But they could not silence their antagonist by such arguments. The Padre quietly and with an air of conviction said, "Alas, that such things should be thought to be true! In fact, if this faction have such an opinion of our Book, and regard the *Furqan* [the Qur'an] as the pure word of God, it is proper that a heaped fire be lighted. We shall take the Gospel in our hands, and the 'Ulama¹² of that faith shall take their book, and then let us enter that testing-place of truth. The escape of any one will be a

sign of his truthfulness." The liverless and black-hearted fellows wavered, and in reply to the challenge had recourse to bigotry and wrangling. This cowardice and effrontery displeased Akbar's equitable soul, and the banquet of enlightenment was made resplendent by acute observations. Continually, in those day-like nights, glorious subtleties and profound words dropped from his pearl-filled mouth.

Among them was this: "Most persons, from intimacy with those who adorn their outside but are inwardly bad, think that outward semblance, and the letter of Islam, profit without internal conviction. Hence we by fear and force compelled many believers in the Brahman [i.e., Hindu] religion to adopt the faith of our ancestors. Now that the light of truth has taken possession of our soul, it has become clear that in this distressful place of contrarities [the world], where darkness of comprehension and conceit are heaped up, fold upon fold, a single step cannot be taken without the torch of proof, and that creed is profitable which is adopted with the approval of wisdom. To repeat the creed, to remove a piece of skin [i.e., to become circumcised] and to place the end of one's bones on the ground [i.e., the head in adoration] from dread of the Sultan,¹³ is not seeking after God.

EUROPEAN-HELD PORTS

One of the occurrences was the appointing of an army to capture the European ports.¹⁴ Inasmuch as conquest is the great rule of princes, and by the observance of this glory-increasing practice, the distraction of plurality¹⁵ places its foot in the peacefulness of unity, and the harassed world

⁸*The House of Worship*, where Akbar held weekly Thursday-night discussions on theological issues with Muslim, Hindu, Zoroastrian, and Christian religious teachers.

⁹Father Rodolfo Acquaviva, a Jesuit missionary.

¹⁰Christian (a follower of Jesus of Nazareth).

¹¹Here he refers to the *ulama*, Muslim religious teachers. Abu'l Fazl, who pursued a vigorous policy of religious and cultural toleration, considered the *ulama* to be narrow-minded hypocrites.

¹²See note 11.

¹³Akbar.

¹⁴The ports of Diu and Bassein (note 6). This expedition was unsuccessful, and Abu'l Fazl tells us nothing more about it.

¹⁵The distraction of multiple rulers.

composes her countenance, the officers of the provinces of Gujarat and Malwa were appointed to this service under the leadership of Qutbu-d-din Khan on 18 Bahman, Divine month (February 1580). The rulers of the Deccan were also

informed that the troops had been sent in that direction in order to remove the Faringis who were a stumbling-block in the way of the pilgrims to the Hijaz.¹⁶

¹⁶Pilgrims to Mecca (Mecca is located in the Hijaz, Arabia's west coast). Many Muslim pilgrims complained that, when embarking at Portuguese ports, they were forced to purchase letters of passage imprinted with images of Jesus and

Mary. Orthodox Muslims consider such images blasphemous, and some Muslim ulama (note 11) went so far as to argue that it was better to forego the pilgrimage than to submit to such sacrilege.

Seventeenth-Century Commerce in India



120 ▼ Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *TRAVELS IN INDIA*

The increasing volume of French trade with seventeenth-century Mughal India attracted Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–after 1689), a Parisian gem merchant, who arrived in India in 1640 on the first of five trips to the empire of the Great Mughal. Following his last voyage to India, which ended in 1668, Tavernier was able to live in wealthy semiretirement thanks to his profitable Eastern ventures. In 1670 he purchased the title of *baron of Aubonne* and settled down to write his memoirs, probably from notes he had made during his career in the East.

His *Travels in India* covers a pivotal period in Mughal-European relations. French and English merchants were becoming increasingly important in India, even as cracks were beginning to appear in the Mughal Empire under Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658) and Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), whose respective building programs (Shah Jahan constructed the Taj Mahal) and military campaigns placed severe strains on the economy and general well-being of Indian society. In the following selection, Tavernier details the manner in which the Mughal government attempted to control and profit from the Western merchants and the tactics some Europeans employed to circumvent these controls and raise their profit margins.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why do you think the English and Dutch East India companies paid a lower tariff on their imported goods and gold? What added to their costs of doing business in India, and why do you think they paid these extra expenses?
2. Did the European merchants take advantage of the Indian officials with whom they dealt? Did the Indian officials seem to resent or not want this business with the Europeans? What do your answers suggest?
3. Why do you think the officers of the Dutch and English East India companies were treated as described? Why did they refuse to engage in

smuggling? What do your answers suggest about relations between the Mughal government and these trading companies?

4. What does the story of the roast pig suggest?
5. Do you perceive any significant differences in Indian-European relations between the era of Akbar and the period described by Tavernier? If so, what are they? What do these changes suggest to you?

As soon as merchandise is landed at Surat¹ it has to be taken to the custom-house, which adjoins the fort. The officers are very strict and search persons with great care. Private individuals pay as much as four and five percent duty on all their goods; but as for the English and Dutch Companies, they pay less. But, on the other hand, I believe that, taking into account what it costs them in . . . presents, which they are obliged to make every year at court, the goods cost them nearly the same as they do private persons.

Gold and silver are charged two percent,² and as soon as they have been counted at the custom-house the Mintmaster removes them, and coins them into money of the country, which he hands over to the owner, in proportion to the amount and standard of the bullion. You settle with him, according to the nature of the amount, a day when he is to deliver the new coins, and for as many days as he delays to do so beyond the term agreed upon, he pays interest in proportion to the sum which he has received. The Indians are cunning and exacting in reference to coin and payments; for when money has been coined for three or four years it has to lose one-half percent,³ and it continues in the same proportion according to age, not being able, as they say, to pass through many hands without some diminution. . . .

As regards gold, the merchants who import it use so much cunning in order to conceal it, that but little of it comes to the knowledge of the

customs' officers. The former do all they can to evade paying the customs, especially as they do not run so much risk as in the custom-houses of Europe. For in those of India, when anyone is detected in fraud, he is let off by paying double, ten percent instead of five, the Emperor comparing the venture of the merchant to a game of hazard, where one plays double or quits.⁴ However, for some time back this has been somewhat changed, and it is today difficult to compound with the customs' officers upon that condition. The Emperor has conceded to the English Captains that they shall not be searched when they leave their vessels to go on shore; but one day an English Captain, when going to Tatta,⁵ one of the largest towns of India, a little above Sindi,⁶ which is at the mouth of the river Indus, as he was about to pass, was arrested by the customs' guards, from whom he could not defend himself, and they searched him in spite of anything he could say. They found gold upon him; he had in fact already conveyed some in sundry journeys which he had made between his vessel and the town; he was, however, let off on payment of the ordinary duty. The Englishman, vexed by this affront, resolved to have his revenge for it, and he took it in a funny manner. He ordered a suckling-pig to be roasted, and to be placed with the grease in a china plate, covered with a napkin, and gave it to a slave to carry with him to the town, anticipating exactly what would happen. As he passed in front of the custom-house,

¹A city on the west coast that served as India's main port of entry for Dutch, English, and French merchants and their goods at this time.

²For the Dutch and English East India companies.

³The Indians discounted these gold coins by 0.5 percent because of the metal that had been rubbed off.

⁴Tavernier writes elsewhere that another reason the Mughals

had such a lenient policy in regard to smuggling was because qur'anic law forbids charging interest and tariffs, and they were troubled by the practice.

⁵A city in modern Pakistan.

⁶Better known as *Sind*, this harbor at the mouth of the Indus River gave its name to the whole northwest corner of India (today Pakistan).

where the Governor of the town, the Shah-bandar,⁷ and the Master of the Mint were seated in a divan, they did not fail to stop him, but the slave still advancing with his covered plate, they told his master that he must needs go to the custom-house, and that they must see what he carried. The more the Englishman protested that the slave carried nothing liable to duty, the less was he believed; and after a long discussion he himself took the plate from the hands of the slave, and proceeded to carry it to the custom-house. The Governor and the Shah-bandar thereupon asked him, in a sharp tone, why he refused to obey orders, and the Englishman, on his part, replied in a rage that what he carried was not liable to duty, and rudely threw the plate in front of them, so that the suckling-pig and the grease soiled the whole place, and splashed up on their garments. As the pig is an abomination to the Muslims, and by their Law they regard as defiled whatever is touched by it, they were com-

pelled to change their garments, to remove the carpet from the divan, and to have the structure rebuilt, without daring to say anything to the Englishman, because the Shah-bandar and the Master of the Mint have to be careful with the Company,⁸ from which the country derives so much profit. As for the Chiefs of the Companies, both English and Dutch, and their deputies, they are treated with so much respect that they are never searched when they come from their vessels; but they, on their part, do not attempt to convey gold in secret as the private merchants do, considering it beneath their dignity to do so. . . .

The English, seeing that the custom of searching them had been adopted, had recourse to little stratagems in order to pass the gold, and the fashion of wearing wigs having reached them from Europe, they bethought themselves of concealing . . . [gold coins] . . . in the nets of their wigs every time they left their vessels to go on shore.

⁷The Mughal commissioner in charge of merchants.

⁸The English East India Company.

Part One



The World in the Era of European Expansion: 1500–1650

A new era in world history began in 1419 when two Portuguese ships left Lagos harbor, at the southwest corner of the Iberian peninsula, and sailed into the ocean waters off Africa's northwest coast. Sailing some six hundred miles, they reached Porto Santo, an uninhabited island that was part of the Madeiras and some four hundred miles west of Morocco, then returned home. In 1420, the first Portuguese settlers arrived in the Madeiras with a charter from Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), the third son of the Portuguese King João I and the driving force behind the 1419 expedition and those that followed. Within a decade the settlers had introduced grapevines from Crete and sugar cane from Sicily, and were reaping handsome profits from the export of wine, high-quality wood, and especially sugar to Europe.

The significance of these events is indisputable: They launched the era of European exploration, expansion, and colonization. During the fifteenth century the Portuguese pushed farther south, claiming and colonizing the Cape Verde Islands and the islands of São Thomé and Príncipe, establishing fortified trading posts on Africa's coast, and learning more about wind patterns, ocean currents, commercial opportunities, and the peoples of Africa. In 1488 Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1498, a fleet of four ships under the command of Vasco da Gama sailed around the cape and reached Calicut, on India's west coast. From India the Portuguese pushed on, reaching the Malay Coast in 1511, China in 1513, and Japan in 1542. They soon established regular commercial routes to Asia and began to reap huge profits from the sale of African ivory, pepper, and slaves and Asian spices, silks, and dyes.

Even before da Gama had reached India, other Europeans were seeking new ocean routes to Asia. Columbus's voyage of 1492 was the first of dozens of expeditions that established a vast Spanish empire not in Asia but the Americas. Northern European rulers, mariners, and merchants soon joined the competition. The French, Dutch, English, Danes, and Swedes struck claims to lands in the Americas and the Caribbean, and the French, Dutch, and English challenged the Portuguese in Asia. That modest Portuguese expedition of 1419 thus initiated two centuries of European exploration, conquest, and

commercial expansion, the consequences of which were so momentous that no other development in the era rivals its importance.

Early European expansion had its greatest impact on Mexico and Central and South America, where Spanish and Portuguese conquests, accompanied by economic exploitation and the introduction of Old World diseases, killed millions of Amerindians and destroyed much of their ancient culture. The indigenous people north of Mexico faced similar threats only after 1600, when European settlers arrived on North America's east coast and soon began their slow but relentless expansion into the continent's interior. Here, the Native Americans' loss of territory and identity was not as sudden or dramatic, but the process was no less painful, and the results no less disastrous.

Africa too was deeply affected by European expansion, even though Europeans remained on the coast and relied on Africans to bring them items for trade. In addition to ivory, gold, and pepper, these items included slaves, who at first were shipped by the Portuguese to the Canary Islands and the Azores, then to Europe, and finally, in ever greater numbers, to the New World.

Asia underwent important changes during the 1500s and 1600s but they had little to do with the Europeans' arrival. In Southwest Asia the Ottoman Turks conquered and consolidated an empire that was centered in Anatolia, Syria-Palestine, and the Arabian Peninsula but also included territory in northern Africa and southeastern Europe. Farther east two new states, the Safavid Empire in Persia and the Mughal Empire in India, took shape. In Southeast Asia the continued expansion of Islam was the most notable development. In Japan, a century of civil war ended in 1603, when the Tokugawa clan established a new regime that kept Japan unified and stable for nearly three centuries. In China, Manchu invaders from the north displaced the declining Ming Dynasty in 1644, and established China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing. By 1650, only the Philippine Islands, conquered by Spain; Siberia, conquered by Russia; and parts of Indonesia, controlled by the Dutch, were under direct European rule.

Europeans, although successful in extending their influence around the world, experienced wrenching changes and bitter conflicts at home. Overseas trade and the influx of gold and silver from the Americas fueled economic growth, but its impact was uneven. Inflation caused hardship for individuals and governments alike, and some regions such as Italy declined as commerce began to shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast. Knowledge of new lands and peoples added to the intellectual ferment fueled by Renaissance humanism, Protestantism, new scientific discoveries, and the invention in the 1450s of printing by movable type by the German goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg. Wars, religious controversy, and revolts were endemic, and some states such as France came close to disintegrating. By 1650, however, Europeans had resolved many of their conflicts. European society had not just survived a century and a half of rapid change but had gathered strength from it. Europe's emergence as a world power had begun.

Chapter 4

Europe in an Age of Conflict and Expansion

The early modern period in European history, traditionally dated from 1500 to 1650, was a time of contrasts and contradictions. Religious bigotry and intolerance were rife, and tens of thousands of individuals from across the religious spectrum were persecuted because of their convictions. But the era also produced Europe's first advocates of religious toleration, and a few societies actually implemented their ideas. Spectacular advances were made in astronomy, physics, and mathematics, and a solid foundation was laid for one of Europe's most enduring achievements — experimental, mathematics-based science. Yet the same society that produced Copernicus, Kepler, and Descartes was terrorized by witchcraft, and the resulting witch hunts and witch trials resulted in the execution of tens of thousands of individuals, most of whom were women who confessed after agonizing torture. Tons of gold and silver poured into Europe from mines in the Americas, and some merchants and investors amassed huge fortunes from Asian and transatlantic trade. But mounting inflation caused hardship for many sixteenth-century Europeans, and around 1600, plague, famine, war, and economic contraction caused a decline in the overall standard of living. Similar contrasts existed in politics. Advocates of centralized monarchy contended with defenders of local autonomy, divine right absolutists faced believers in regicide, and kings battled parliaments.

The origins of these conflicts and contradictions are rooted in the disasters that struck Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries — papal exile and schism, the Black Death, war, and economic dislocation. They were the backdrop for even more jarring changes initiated in the early 1500s. Within just a few decades Europeans faced a host of disconcerting new realities — overseas discoveries, the rapid spread of

print culture, Copernicus's rejection of ancient astronomy, Ottoman Turkish conquests in Hungary and Austria, and massive peasant revolts in Germany. Overshadowing everything else was the onset of the Protestant Reformation, sparked by Martin Luther's attack on the Roman Catholic Church in 1517. The Protestant revolt shattered Europe's religious unity and destroyed the defining characteristic of medieval society — its allegiance to Catholic Christianity as defined by the Roman papacy. In addition, the religious conflicts spawned by the Reformation heightened social and political tensions and contributed to the wars, revolts, and social conflicts that marred the age.

Expansionist Europe was not, as one might expect, a stable, cohesive, and self-confident society. Its success in developing the military potential of gunpowder weapons, in particular the ability to mount guns on ocean-going ships, enabled Europeans to extend their political and economic power to the Americas, Africa, and Asia. But these accomplishments, rightly deemed significant by historians, gave scant comfort to the majority of Europeans, who faced a troubled present and anticipated the future with more foreboding than hope.

Protestant Revolt and Catholic Response

During the High Middle Ages (ca. 1000–1300), the “age of faith,” the esteem and devotion accorded the Catholic Church resulted in part from the clergy's moral example and leadership and in part from the Church's promise that its doctrines and practices, if followed, assured eternal salvation. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, the Church was rocked by schism, scandal, financial deficits, political challenges, and uninspired and corrupt leadership. Anger over abuses intensified, especially in northern Europe, and many Europeans began to question the Church's ability to “deliver” the salvation they fervently sought. This doubt and alienation goes far in explaining the success of the Protestant Reformation, begun in 1517 when a German friar, Martin Luther, openly challenged certain Catholic teachings, especially the doctrine that people could escape punishment for their sins by purchasing indulgences. By 1650, Protestants dominated northern Germany, Scandinavia, England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and major Swiss cities, and comprised a significant minority in France and central Europe.

No area of European life was unaffected by the Protestant Reformation. Education expanded throughout Europe because of the need of competing churches for educated leadership, and especially among Protestants because of their belief

in the importance of Bible reading by the laity. The distinction between clergy and laity was narrowed because of the Protestant doctrine that devout Christian laypersons were just as pleasing to God as priests and members of religious orders. Literacy among women increased as a result of Protestant educational efforts, and in the view of some historians, the Protestant affirmation of clerical marriage fostered a more positive view of women. Conversely, Protestant women saw no appreciable gains in their legal or economic status and were just as likely as their Catholic sisters to be victims of witch hunts and witch trials.

The religious struggles of the Reformation era also profoundly affected politics. With religious passions exacerbating dynastic rivalries and internal conflicts, Europe endured a century of religious wars, some of which were civil wars and some wars between states. They began with warfare between Protestant and Catholic factions in Switzerland in 1531 and ended with the 'Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), Europe's most deadly and devastating military conflict until the twentieth century.

The most significant result of the Reformation era was its contribution to the ongoing secularization of European politics, culture, and thought. In the short run, the emergence of Protestantism intensified religious feeling and thrust religion into the forefront of European life. Largely as a result of its struggles with Protestantism, the Catholic Church itself regained much of its spiritual focus and vitality. In the long run, however, the proliferation of competing faiths divided and weakened Europe's churches, and the interminable years of religious intolerance and warfare discredited religion in the eyes of many. The gradual acceptance of religious diversity within individual states and Europe as a whole was a sign that religion was being taken less seriously. Paradoxically, the very intensity of the era's religious passions helped undermine the role of religion in European life and thought.

Luther's Views of Christianity and Society



1 ▼ *Martin Luther, TABLE TALK*

The Protestant Reformation had many voices, but its first prophet was Martin Luther (1483–1546), whose Ninety-Five Theses initiated the momentous anti-Catholic rebellion in 1517. Born into the family of a German miner and educated at the University of Erfurt, the young Luther was preparing for a career as a lawyer when suddenly in 1505 he abandoned his plans and became an Augustinian friar. Luther's decision resulted from dissatisfaction over his relationship with God and doubts about his personal salvation. He hoped that life as an Augustinian would protect him from temptation and give him the opportunity to win God's favor by devoting himself to prayer, study, and the sacraments. His spiritual anxieties soon returned, however. Overwhelmed by his perceived inadequacies and failings, he became convinced that he could never "earn" his salvation by living up to the high standards of selflessness, charity, and purity required by

Jesus of his followers. Certain he could never satisfy an angry, judging God, he was terrorized by the prospect of eternal damnation.

During the 1510s, however, while teaching theology at the University of Wittenberg, Luther found spiritual peace through his reflections on the scriptures, especially Paul's letter to the Romans. He concluded that human beings, burdened as they were by weakness and sin, could never *earn* salvation by leading blameless lives and performing in the proper spirit the pious acts enjoined by the Catholic Church. Rather, salvation was an unmerited divine gift, resulting from God-implanted faith in Jesus, especially the redemptive power of His death and resurrection. This fundamental Protestant doctrine of *justification by faith alone* inspired Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, in which he attacked Catholic teaching on indulgences, by which people could atone for their sins and ensure their own and loved ones' salvation by contributing money to the Church. Within five years Luther was the recognized leader of a religious movement — Protestantism — that broke with the Catholic Church over the question of salvation and a host of other issues concerning Christianity and the Christian life.

As the Reformation spread from Germany to other parts of Europe, leadership of Protestantism passed to younger people such as John Calvin in Geneva and John Knox in Scotland. Luther remained at Wittenberg, and as pastor and professor wrote hundreds of sermons and treatises in defense of his religious vision. He and his wife, Katharina, a former nun, made their home in the Augustinian convent in Wittenberg where Luther had lived as a friar. Here they raised a family and entertained scores of religious leaders and students with whom the talkative Luther loved to discourse on the issues of the day. From 1522 to 1546 some of these guests recorded Luther's most notable sayings as they remembered them, and from their journals we have what is known as Luther's *Tischreden*, or *Table Talk*.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Luther, what is the importance of the Bible in a Christian's life? How in his view had the Roman Catholic Church obscured the meaning and message of the Bible?
2. How does Luther define faith? Why is it superior to external acts of devotion?
3. What are Luther's objections to the pope and other officials of the Catholic Church?
4. How does Luther view marriage, in particular women's role in marriage?
5. What perspective does Luther have on the Turkish threat to European society? How is his perspective affected by his religious beliefs?

SALVATION

Because as the everlasting, merciful God, through his Word¹ and Sacraments,² talks and deals with us, all other creatures excluded, not of temporal things which pertain to this vanishing life, and which in the beginning he provided richly for us, but as to where we shall go when we depart from here, and gives unto us his Son for a Savior, delivering us from sin and death, and purchasing for us everlasting righteousness, life, and salvation, therefore it is most certain, that we do not die away like the beasts that have no understanding; but so many of us . . . shall through him be raised again to life everlasting at the last day, and the ungodly to everlasting destruction.

▼ ▼ ▼

FAITH VERSUS GOOD WORKS

He that goes from the gospel to the law,³ thinking to be saved by good works,⁴ falls as uneasily as he who falls from the true service of God to idolatry; for, without Christ, all is idolatry and fictitious imaginings of God, whether of the Turkish Qur'an, of the pope's decrees, or Moses' laws; if a man think thereby to be justified and saved before God, he is undone.

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The gospel preaches nothing of the merit of works; he that says the gospel requires works for salvation, I say, flat and plain, is a liar.

¹The *Word* is God's message, especially as revealed through Jesus' life.

²Sacraments are rites that are outward visible signs of an inward spiritual grace. Of the seven Catholic sacraments, Luther retained two: baptism and the eucharist.

³By *law* Luther meant religious rules and regulations; he believed that futile human efforts to live strictly according to the dictates of the law undermined true faith.

⁴All the ceremonies and pious activities such as pilgrimages, relic veneration, and attendance at Mass that the Catholic Church promoted as vehicles of God's grace and eternal salvation.

Nothing that is properly good proceeds out of the works of the law, unless grace be present; for what we are forced to do, goes not from the heart, nor is acceptable.

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A Capuchin⁵ says: wear a grey coat and a hood, a rope round thy body, and sandals on thy feet. A Cordelier says: put on a black hood; an ordinary papist says: do this or that work, hear mass, pray, fast, give alms, etc. But a true Christian says: I am justified and saved only by faith in Christ, without any works or merits of my own; compare these together, and judge which is the true righteousness.

▼ ▼ ▼

I have often been resolved to live uprightly, and to lead a true godly life, and to set everything aside that would hinder this, but it was far from being put in execution; even as it was with Peter,⁶ when he swore he would lay down his life for Christ.

▼ ▼ ▼

I will not lie or dissemble before my God, but will freely confess, I am not able to effect that good which I intend, but await the happy hour when God shall be pleased to meet me with his grace.

▼ ▼ ▼

A Christian's worshiping is not the external, hypocritical mask that our friars wear, when they

⁵The Capuchins and Cordeliers were both branches of the Franciscan order noted for their austerity and strict poverty. A distinctive feature of the Capuchins' dress was their peaked hood, or *capuche*.

⁶One of Jesus' twelve apostles; following Jesus' arrest by Roman soldiers before his crucifixion, Peter three times denied any relationship with Jesus, despite having vowed shortly before to lay down his life for his teacher. Eventually, Peter died a martyr in Rome.

chastise their bodies, torment and make themselves faint, with ostentatious fasting, watching, singing, wearing hair shirts, scourging themselves, etc. Such worshiping God does not desire.

THE BIBLE

Great is the strength of the divine Word. In the epistle to the Hebrews,⁷ it is called "a two-edged sword." But we have neglected and scorned the pure and clear Word, and have drunk not of the fresh and cool spring; we are gone from the clear fountain to the foul puddle, and drunk its filthy water; that is, we have sedulously read old writers and teachers, who went about with speculative reasonings, like the monks and friars.

▼ ▼ ▼

The ungodly papists prefer the authority of the church far above God's Word; a blasphemy abominable and not to be endured; void of all shame and piety, they spit in God's face. Truly, God's patience is exceeding great, in that they are not destroyed; but so it always has been.

THE PAPACY AND THE CLERGY

How does it happen that the popes pretend that they form the Church, when, all the while, they are bitter enemies of the Church, and have no knowledge, certainly no comprehension, of the holy gospel? Pope, cardinals, bishops, not a soul of them has read the Bible; it is a book unknown to them. They are a pack of guzzling, gluttonous wretches, rich, wallowing in wealth and laziness, resting secure in their power, and never, for a moment, thinking of accomplishing God's will.

▼ ▼ ▼

Kings and princes coin money only out of metals, but the pope coins money out of everything

— indulgences, ceremonies, dispensations, pardons; all fish come to his net. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

A gentleman being at the point of death, a monk from the next convent came to see what he could pick up, and said to the gentleman: Sir, will you give so and so to our monastery? The dying man, unable to speak, replied by a nod of the head, whereupon the monk, turning to the gentleman's son, said: You see, your father makes us this bequest. The son said to the father: Sir, is it your pleasure that I kick this monk down the stairs? The dying man nodded as before, and the son immediately drove the monk out of doors.

▼ ▼ ▼

The papists took the invocation of saints from the pagans, who divided God into numberless images and idols, and ordained to each its particular office and work. . . .

The invocation of saints is a most abominable blindness and heresy; yet the papists will not give it up. The pope's greatest profit arises from the dead; for the calling on dead saints brings him infinite sums of money and riches, far more than he gets from the living. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

In Popedom they make priests, not to preach and teach God's Word, but only to celebrate mass, and to roam about with the sacrament. For, when a bishop ordains a man, he says: Take the power to celebrate mass, and to offer it for the living and the dead. But we ordain priests according to the command of Christ and St. Paul, namely, to preach the pure gospel and God's Word. The papists in their ordinations make no mention of preaching and teaching God's Word, therefore their consecrating and ordaining is false and wrong, for all worshiping which is not ordained

⁷Paul's Letter to the Hebrews, a part of the Christian Bible, or New Testament.

of God, or erected by God's Word and command, is worthless, yea, mere idolatry.

THE REFORM OF THE CHURCH

The pope and his crew can in no way endure the idea of reformation; the mere word creates more alarm at Rome than thunderbolts from heaven or the day of judgment. A cardinal said the other day: Let them eat, and drink, and do what they will; but as to reforming us, we think that is a vain idea; we will not endure it. Neither will we Protestants be satisfied, though they administer the sacrament in both kinds, and permit priests to marry;⁸ we will also have the doctrine of the faith pure and unfalsified, and the righteousness that justifies and saves before God, and which expels and drives away all idolatry and false-worshiping; with these gone and banished, the foundation on which Popedom is built also falls.

▼ ▼ ▼

The chief cause that I fell out with the pope was this: the pope boasted that he was the head of the church, and condemned all that would not be under his power and authority; . . . Further, he took upon him power, rule, and authority over the Christian church, and over the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God; no man must presume to expound the Scriptures, but only he, and according to his ridiculous conceits; this was not to be endured. They who, against God's word, boast of the church's authority, are mere idiots.

MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

Who can sufficiently admire the state of conjugal union, which God has instituted and founded, and from which all human creatures, indeed, all states proceed. Where would we be if it did not exist? But neither God's ordinance, nor the gra-

cious presence of children, the fruit of matrimony, moves the ungodly world, which sees only the temporal difficulties and troubles of matrimony, but sees not the great treasure that is hidden in it. We were all born of women — emperors, kings, princes, yea, Christ himself, the Son of God, did not disdain to be born of a virgin. Let the scoffers and rejecters of matrimony go hang, . . . and the papists, who reject married life, and yet have mistresses; if they need to scoff at matrimony, let them be consistent, and keep no concubines.

▼ ▼ ▼

Marrying cannot be without women, nor can the world subsist without them. To marry is medicine against unchastity. A woman is, or at least should be, a friendly, courteous, and merry companion in life; this is why they are named house-honors, the honor and ornament of the house, and inclined to tenderness; for this reason are they chiefly created, to bear children, and be the pleasure, joy, and solace of their husbands.

THE TURKISH THREAT

The 21st of December, 1536, George, marquis of Brandenburg came to Wittenberg, and announced that the Turks had obtained a great victory over the Germans,⁹ whose fine army had been betrayed and massacred; he said that many princes and brave captains had perished, and that such Christians as remained prisoners, had been treated with extreme cruelty, their noses being slit, and themselves used most scornfully. Luther said: We, Germans, must consider hereupon that God's anger is at our gates, that we should hasten to repentance while there is yet time. . . .

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⁸Two of the many changes that Protestants demanded were allowing all Christians to receive the sacrament of the eucharist in the forms of bread and wine (in medieval Roman Catholic practice, only the priest drank the eucharistic wine)

and allowing priests to marry. The principle behind both changes was Luther's teaching that all Christians are priests — that is, responsible for their own religious faith.

⁹It is unclear what battle the marquis is describing.

Luther complained of the emperor Charles's¹⁰ negligence, who, taken up with other wars, suffered the Turk to capture one place after another. It is with the Turks as previously it was with the Romans, every subject is a soldier, as long as he is able to bear arms, so they have always a disciplined army ready for the field; whereas we gather

together ephemeral bodies of vagabonds, untried wretches, upon whom is no dependence. My fear is, that the papists will unite with the Turks to exterminate us.¹¹ Please God, may my anticipation not come true, but certain it is, that the desperate creatures will do their best to deliver us over to the Turks.

¹⁰Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, also known as Charles I as king of Spain, a devout Roman Catholic.

¹¹The German Lutherans.

A Blueprint for Catholic Revival



2 ▼ *DECREES OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT*

The reform and revival of the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century had many dimensions — the foundation of new religious orders such as the Society of Jesus; reforms initiated by dedicated popes, bishops, and leaders of religious orders; the political and military victories of arch-Catholic Spain; the emotional appeal of Baroque art and architecture; and the renewed religious dedication on the part of countless individual Catholic men and women. Nothing, however, had more impact than the Council of Trent, an assembly of Catholic churchmen that met on and off for almost twenty years between 1545 and 1563. Out of its debates and decisions there emerged a new Catholic Church more confident of its doctrines, clearer in its mission, and better prepared to meet the challenge of Protestantism.

Many times in the past, popes had convened Church councils to give bishops, archbishops, leaders of religious orders, and theologians an opportunity to debate and resolve fundamental theological and policy issues. In the 1520s, the main supporter of convening a Church council was the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. He hoped that such a gathering, attended by both Protestants and Catholics, would encourage Protestants to return to the Catholic fold by ending abuses and working out compromises on divisive theological issues. Such a strategy was at first opposed by many Catholics, including Pope Clement VII (1523–1534), who feared that a council would undermine the papacy's fiscal base and authority.

Clement's successor, Paul III (1534–1549), who fully understood the gravity of the Church's situation and faced continuing pressure from Charles V, concluded that convening a Church council was necessary. Agreeing on a time, place, and agenda was difficult, however, and as a result, the long-awaited council did not begin until 1545 in the small city of Trent, on the southern slope of the Austrian Alps. With its deliberations and votes gradually coming under the control of the papacy and the numerically ascendant Italian bishops, the council continued to meet until 1563, during which time it clarified numerous theological issues and approved a broad program of reform and renewal for the Church.

For those hoping for reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics, the Council of Trent was a disappointment. Few Protestants attended, and in any case by the time the council met, theological disagreements had hardened to the point that meaningful compromises were unlikely. Instead of a vehicle for reconciliation, the Council of Trent affirmed traditional Catholic teachings and girded the Church for its struggle with Protestantism during the era of religious wars.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The council's declarations on justification affirm the importance of God's freely given grace as the beginning of the process of salvation. What else is required of the believer to gain salvation?
2. What do the "Rules Concerning Prohibited Books" reveal about the Church's attitudes toward the printed book?
3. How openly do the council's statements admit that abuses existed among the clergy? What steps are proposed concerning clerical performance and behavior?
4. If Luther or one of his followers had been given the opportunity to comment on the decisions of the Council of Trent represented in this assignment, what would they have said about the following issues: individual salvation; the Bible; the nature of the priesthood; saints; indulgences?

CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION¹

If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law, without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be an anathema.² . . .

If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required . . . in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema. . . .

If anyone says that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to observe, let him be anathema. . . .

If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema. . . .

CONCERNING PROHIBITED BOOKS

Since it is clear from experience that if the Sacred Books³ are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the vernacular, there will . . . arise . . . more harm than good, the matter is . . . left to the judgement of the bishop or inquisitor,⁴ who may . . . permit the reading of the

¹The process by which a person is freed from the penalty of his or her sin and is accepted by God as worthy of being saved.

²Refers to a person made subject to excommunication and extreme condemnation by an official ecclesiastical authority.

³The Bible.

⁴An official approved by the Church to discover and suppress heresy, an opinion at variance with the authorized teaching of the Church.

Sacred Books translated into the vernacular by Catholic authors to those who they know will derive from such reading no harm but rather an increase of faith and piety, which permission they must have in writing. Those, however, who presume to read or possess them without such permission may not receive absolution from their sins till they have handed them over to the ordinary.⁵ Bookdealers who sell or in any other way supply Bibles written in the vernacular to anyone who has not this permission, shall lose the price of the books, which is applied by the bishop to pious purposes, and . . . they shall be subject to other penalties which are left to the judgment of the same bishop. . . .

All book-dealers and venders of books shall have in their libraries a list of books which they have for sale subscribed by the said persons, and without the permission of the same appointed persons they may not under penalties of confiscation of the books and other penalties, . . . possess or sell or . . . supply other books. . . .

Finally, all the faithful are commanded not to presume to read or possess any books contrary to the prescriptions of these rules or the prohibition of this list. And if anyone should read or possess books by heretics . . . , he incurs immediately the sentence of excommunication.⁶

ON THE FOUNDING OF SEMINARIES

Since the age of youth, . . . unless educated from its tender years in piety and religion before the habits of vice take possession of the whole man, will never perfectly and without the greatest and well-nigh extraordinary help of Almighty God persevere in ecclesiastical discipline, the holy

council decrees⁷ that all⁸ cathedral and metropolitan churches⁷ and churches greater than these shall be bound, . . . to provide for, to educate in religion, and to train in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain number of boys of their city and diocese, . . . in a college located near the said churches or in some other suitable place. . . . Into this college shall be received such as are at least twelve years of age, are born of lawful wedlock, who know how to read and write competently, and whose character and inclination justify the hope that they will dedicate themselves forever to the ecclesiastical ministry. . . . And that they may be better trained in . . . ecclesiastical discipline, they shall . . . always wear the tonsure⁸ and the clerical garb; they shall study grammar, singing, ecclesiastical computation,⁹ and other useful arts; shall be instructed in Sacred Scripture, ecclesiastical books, the homilies of the saints, the manner of administering the sacraments, especially those things that seem adapted to the hearing of confessions, and the rites and ceremonies. The bishop shall see to it that they are present every day at the sacrifice of the mass, confess their sins at least once a month, receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ¹⁰ in accordance with the directions of their confessor, and on festival days serve in the cathedral and other churches of the locality. . . .

ON CLERICAL CONDUCT

Since therefore the more these things contribute usefulness and honor in the Church of God, so the more zealously must they be observed, the holy council ordains that those things which have in the past been frequently and wholesomely enacted by the supreme pontiffs and holy coun-

⁵Church official with jurisdiction in a certain area of Church life.

⁶An ecclesiastical censure that excludes a person from communion with the faithful and prevents him or her from partaking in the sacraments of the Church.

⁷A cathedral church is the home church of a bishop; a metropolitan church is the church of an archbishop.

⁸The rite by which a layman becomes a member of the

clergy; during the rite a small circular area is shaved on the top of the candidate's head.

⁹The process of determining the dates of Holy Days, especially Easter.

¹⁰In other words, to receive the consecrated communion wafer, believed by Catholics to have been transformed into the body of Christ.

cils concerning adherence to the life, conduct, dress, and learning of clerics, as also the avoidance of luxury, feasting, dances, gambling, sports, and all sorts of crime and secular pursuits shall in the future be observed under the same or greater penalties. . . .

It is to be desired that those who assume the episcopal office know what are their duties, and understand that they have been called not for their own convenience, not for riches or luxury, but to labors and cares for the glory of God. . . . Wherefore, it commands not only that bishops be content with modest furniture and a frugal table, but also that they take heed that in the rest of their manner of living and in their whole house, nothing appears that is at variance with this holy ordinance, or that does not manifest simplicity, zeal for God and a contempt for vanities. But above all does it forbid them to attempt to enrich their relations or domestics from the revenues of the Church. . . . And what has been said of bishops is to hold ecclesiastical benefices,¹¹ . . . but it decrees that it applies also to the cardinals¹² of the holy Roman Church.

How shameful and how unworthy it is of the name of clerics . . . to live in the filth of impurity and unclean cohabitation,¹³ the thing itself sufficiently testifies by the common scandal of all the faithful and the supreme disgraces on the clerical order. Wherefore, that the ministers of the Church may be brought back to the continency and purity of life which is proper to them, . . . the holy council forbids all clerics whatsoever to presume to keep concubines or other women concerning whom suspicion can be had in their house or elsewhere, or to presume to have any association with them; . . .

ON INDULGENCES

Since the power of granting indulgences¹⁴ was conferred by Christ on the Church, . . . the holy council teaches and commands that the use of indulgences, . . . is to be retained in the Church, and it condemns . . . those who assert that they are useless or deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them. In granting them, however, it desires that . . . moderation be observed, lest by too great facility ecclesiastical discipline be weakened. But desiring that the abuses which have become connected with them . . . be amended and corrected, it ordains . . . that all evil traffic in them, which has been a most prolific source of abuses among the Christian people, be absolutely abolished. . . .

ON THE VENERATION OF SAINTS AND SACRED IMAGES

The holy council commands all bishops and others who hold the office of teaching and have charges of the [care of souls], that they instruct the faithful diligently, teaching them that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men, that it is good and beneficial . . . to invoke them and to have recourse to their prayers, assistance and support in order to obtain favors from God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . [Also,] those who maintain that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of the saints, or that these and other memorials are honored by the faithful without profit, and that the places dedicated to the memory of the saints for the purpose of obtaining their aid are visited in vain, are to be utterly

¹¹An ecclesiastical office to which a permanent source of income or revenue is attached.

¹²High Church officials who served as counselors and assistants of the pope and, as members of the College of Cardinals, elected new popes.

¹³Living with a woman.

¹⁴Connected with the sacrament of penance, an indulgence was originally a grant by the Church that exempted a person from the temporal penalties (the "acts of penance")

imposed by a priest after confession. Crusaders were given a plenary (full) indulgence for their participation in the Holy War against the Muslims. By the early sixteenth century indulgences could be purchased for one's own benefit and for the benefit of souls believed to be in Purgatory. Indulgence trafficking became a major source of revenue for the Church, and many Christians came to believe the claims of indulgence preachers that salvation could be purchased through indulgences.

condemned. . . . Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints are to be placed and retained especially in the churches, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them.

Art as Protestant Propaganda



3 ▼ *Lucas Cranach the Younger,*

TWO KINDS OF PREACHING: EVANGELICAL AND PAPAL, and Mattias Gerung, THE CHARIOT OF THE POPE AND THE TURK

Some seventy years before Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg, in Mainz another German, Johannes Gutenberg (ca. 1395–1468) perfected a new method of printing books through movable metal type. Printing shops soon were established in hundreds of European towns and cities, and by the mid sixteenth century many millions of books and pamphlets had been published. Many of these publications played a key role in determining the dynamics and outcome of the Reformation era's religious struggles.

The Ninety-Five Theses, intended by Luther to spark academic debate at the University of Wittenberg, instead rocketed him to national prominence when they were translated into German and made available in cheap printed editions. Subsequently, Luther and his followers used the printed page to advance their ideas in Latin treatises for learned audiences and, more tellingly, in thousands of German books and pamphlets for the general population. Many of these works contained woodcuts and engravings to illustrate key points and make Protestant ideas accessible even to the illiterate. Catholics were slower to utilize the new technology, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage in the competition for the public's religious allegiance.

Both woodcuts in this section were produced by Lutheran artists in the 1540s. The first, *Two Kinds of Preaching: Evangelical and Papal*, is the work of Lucas Cranach the Younger (1515–1586), a lifelong resident of Wittenberg and a friend of Luther. The second, *The Chariot of the Pope and the Turk*, was executed by Mattias Gerung (ca. 1500–1569), a painter and woodcutter from western Germany; in the 1530s and 1540s he received a number of commissions from a German prince, Count Palatine Otthenreich, who introduced Lutheranism into his territories in 1542.

Two Kinds of Preaching, printed in 1547, was distributed as a broadsheet, a large single printed sheet sold by booksellers for a few cents and designed to reach a wide audience. We have produced the broadsheet on two pages, although in its original form it is undivided. Facing left from a central pulpit is Luther, whose left hand rests on a Bible. On the pulpit itself are words from the New Testament Book of Acts, "All prophets attest to this, that there is no other name

in heaven than that of Christ.” Above Luther is a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, whose major functions are inspiration, solace, and sanctification. Luther points to images of the Paschal Lamb (a symbol of the risen Christ), the risen Christ himself, and finally to God the Father, who holds an orb symbolizing his dominion over creation. Christ directs the following words toward God: “Holy Father, save them. I have sacrificed myself for them with my wounds.” Below Christ is written, “If we sin we have an advocate before God, so let us turn in consolation to this means of grace.” In the center and lower left are depicted the two Lutheran sacraments, baptism and the eucharist. It is noteworthy that in the celebration of the eucharist, both the bread and wine are offered to the laity, as opposed to the Catholic practice of restricting the drinking of the wine to the priest.

The right side of the woodcut is a Lutheran version of how the Roman Church perverted Christianity. The preaching friar is inspired by an imp-like demon blowing air into his ear. Directed to an audience mostly of clergy, his message, according to the words above his head, is that the practices going on about him offer an easy path to salvation. In the upper right corner an angry God rains down thunderbolts while Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, shows the uselessness of saints as mediators between man and God by attempting in vain to intercede on behalf of humanity. In the lower right corner indulgences are being sold by the pope, who holds a sign reading, “Because the coin rings, the soul to heaven springs.” But the message on the money bag reads, “This is shame and vice, squeezed from your donations.” Just behind the pope is a priest celebrating a private mass and an altar being consecrated by a bird-like demon. Still deeper in the background is a dying man having his hair clipped to resemble a monk and having a monk’s hood placed on his head, steps that supposedly would ensure his salvation. The attending nun sprinkles the man with holy water and holds a banner reading, “May the cowl, the tonsure, and the water aid you.” To the right of this scene a bishop consecrates a bell. In the far background two pilgrims stride toward a chapel surrounded by a procession in honor of the saint depicted on the banner.

Mattias Gerung’s *The Chariot of the Pope and Turk* was one of more than fifty woodcuts that were to accompany a printed version of a commentary on the New Testament Book of Revelations. In many of them the pope and the Ottoman Turkish sultan are portrayed together as the two greatest enemies of Christendom: The pope threatened true religion, while the sultan, with his recent conquests in southeastern Europe, threatened military disaster for Europe and the triumph of Islam. In this woodcut, a chariot blocks a narrow passage through which a ship is attempting to pass to a placid body of water in the background. This strange chariot, which is being pulled in two directions, may refer to the German proverb, “A wagon with horses hitched at both ends will not likely move.” From the chariot the sultan urges on his soldiers on the left, while the pope exhorts his followers, armed with banners of processions and indulgence proclamations, on the right. From the clouds above emerges God’s hand holding the sword of divine punishment.

(See page 19 for Questions for Analysis.)



Lucas Cranach the Younger, Two Kinds of Preaching: Evangelical

Abgöttischen Lehr des Antichrists in den fürnemsten stücken.'



Lucas Cranach the Younger, 'Two Kinds of Preaching: Papal'



Matthias Gerung, The Chariot of the Pope and the Turk

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What differences in the makeup of the crowds surrounding the pulpit do you see in the two sides of Cranach's picture? What point is Cranach trying to make?
 2. Note the figures in the right side of Cranach's picture who are members of religious orders (identifiable by their tonsure, or shaven crown). How do their garb and general appearance confirm Lutheran beliefs about the hypocrisy of monks?
 3. Compare the two preachers. What messages is Cranach trying to communicate in their gestures and in his depiction of the pulpits from which they are preaching?
 4. In both sides of Cranach's picture the eucharist is being celebrated. What differences do you see, and what is their significance?
 5. Cranach's woodcut depicts the Catholic Church as full of abuses. What are some of these abuses, and how are they illustrated?
 6. Cranach depicts Lutheranism as an expression of true Christianity. What specific details from the left side of the woodcut convey this message?
 7. In the Gerung woodcut what in your opinion is the symbolism of the ships?
 8. Compare the "weapons" being held by the followers of the pope and sultan in the Gerung woodcut. What message do they communicate about the Turks and the Catholics?
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Spanish Perspectives on the New World

Europeans were surprised and intrigued by what their mariners and merchants encountered in Africa and Asia, but nothing prepared them for their explorers' astounding discoveries across the Atlantic. No one knew what to make of two vast continents populated not only by "savages" with unsophisticated tools and crude weapons but also by others who lived in large cities, had powerful, complex governments, and enjoyed great wealth. Were the Indians, as they came to be known, truly human? Did they have souls and the gift of reason? How should they be treated? These questions gained urgency when the Europeans realized that their superior weaponry and the devastating effect of epidemic disease made it difficult for the native people to resist European aggression. Did their very weakness justify exploitation and enslavement? Or did it oblige the Europeans not just to convert these people to Christianity but to educate them and make them partners in the use of European tools, livestock, crops, and medicines?

The Spaniards were the first Europeans to seriously discuss such questions. Churchmen, soldiers, royal officials, colonists, kings, and queens searched their souls and exercised their minds to find policies that satisfied both their quest for gain and their religious principles. The controversy in Spain reached a climax in 1550 when, at the command of King Charles I (also known as the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V), two intellectuals, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé

de Las Casas, debated Spain's Indian policy before a panel of judges at Valladolid for an entire week. The judges never came to a decision, and both Las Casas, who defended the Indians' rights, and Sepúlveda, who justified their enslavement, claimed victory.

The Uncivilized Have Been Justly Conquered



4 ▼ *Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda,* *DEMOCRATES SECUNDUS, OR* *THE JUST CAUSES OF WAR* *AGAINST THE INDIANS*

Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was born in 1490 into a Spanish aristocratic family and studied ancient literature and philosophy at the University of Alcalá in Spain. With ambitions for a scholarly career, he moved to Italy, the center of Renaissance Aristotelianism, where he studied and taught for twenty years. He later served as chaplain and official historian for King Charles I of Spain and later for his son, Philip II. Although best known for his commentaries on Aristotle, Sepúlveda also wrote a number of original philosophical and theological works. His view that superior peoples had the right to enslave inferiors was an elaboration of an argument found in Aristotle. He first expounded his theory in 1547 in his *Democrates Secundus, or the Just Causes of War against the Indians*, a dialogue between fictitious Democrates, who expresses the author's views, and Leopoldo, who serves as his foil. The arguments he advanced in 1550 against Las Casas were based on this work. Sepúlveda died in 1573, embittered by the controversies that had clouded his old age.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Sepúlveda justify the enslavement of inferior peoples by their superiors?
2. For Sepúlveda, what qualities of the Spaniards make them superior?
3. How does he "prove" the inferiority of the Indians?
4. What is there about the fate of the Aztecs that reinforces Sepúlveda's general views of the Indians?
5. If, for the sake of argument, one were to accept Sepúlveda's premises concerning the Indians' inferiority, would one be forced to accept his conclusions?
6. What might the judges at Valladolid have found convincing in Sepúlveda's arguments? What weaknesses might they have discerned?

It is established then, in accordance with the authority of the most eminent thinkers, that the dominion of prudent, good, and humane men over those of contrary disposition is just and natural. Nothing else justified the legitimate empire of the Romans over other peoples, according to the testimony of St. Thomas¹ in his work on the rule of the prince. St. Thomas here followed St. Augustine, who, in referring to the empire of the Romans in the fifth book of *The City of God*, wrote: "God conceded to the Romans a very extensive and glorious empire in order to keep grave evils from spreading among many peoples who, in search of glory, coveted riches and many other vices." In other words God gave the Romans their empire so that, with the good legislation that they instituted and the virtue in which they excelled, they might change the customs and suppress and correct the vices of many barbarian peoples. . . .

Turning then to our topic, whether it is proper and just that those who are superior and who excel in nature, customs, and laws rule over their inferiors, you can easily understand . . . if you are familiar with the character and moral code of the two peoples, that it is with perfect right that the Spaniards exercise their dominion over those barbarians of the New World and its adjacent islands. For in prudence, talent, and every kind of virtue and human sentiment they are as inferior to the Spaniards as children are to adults, or women to men, or the cruel and inhumane to the very gentle, or the excessively intemperate to the continent and moderate.

But I do not think that you expect me to speak of the prudence and talent of the Spaniards, for you have, I think, read Lucan, Silius Italicus, the

two Senecas, and among later figures St. Isidore, who is inferior to none in theology, and Averroës and Avempace who are excellent in philosophy, and in astronomy King Alfonso,² not to mention others whom it would take too long to enumerate. And who is ignorant of the Spaniards' other virtues: courage, humanity, justice, and religion? I refer simply to the princes and to those whose aid and skill they utilize to govern the state, to those, in short, who have received a liberal education. And what shall I say of their moderation in rejecting gluttony and lasciviousness, inasmuch as no nation or very few nations of Europe can compare with the frugality and sobriety of the Spaniards? I admit that I have observed in these most recent times that through contact with foreigners luxury has invaded the tables of our nobles. Still, since this is reproved by good men among the people, it is to be hoped that in a short while they may return to the traditional and innate sobriety of our native custom.

As for the Christian religion, I have witnessed many clear proofs of the firm roots it has in the hearts of Spaniards, even those dedicated to the military. The best proof of all has seemed to me to be the fact that in the great plague that followed the sack of Rome, in the Pontificate of Clement VII, not a single Spaniard among those who died in the epidemic failed to request in his will that all the goods stolen from the citizens be restored to them.³ And I, who was following the army and was in the city observing it all diligently, was a witness to it. . . . What shall I say of the Spanish soldiers' gentleness and humanitarian sentiments? Their only and greatest solicitude and care in the battles, after the winning

¹The theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) was a member of the Dominican religious order; his views were accepted as authoritative by the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was a convert to Christianity whose discussions of salvation, the Church, human nature, and the sacraments exerted enormous influence on Christian thought.

²All eight of these men were born in Spain. Lucan (65–39 B.C.E.) and Silius Italicus (100–26 B.C.E.) were poets; Seneca the Elder (55 B.C.E.–39 C.E.) wrote a book on Roman

rhetoricians; Seneca the Younger (4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.) was a statesman, philosopher, and tragedian; Isidore of Seville (560–636) was a historian and theologian; Averroës (1126–1198) and Avempace (d. 1138) were Spanish Muslim philosophers; and King Alfonso X (1221–1284) was a famous patron of learning and literature.

³The Sack of Rome occurred in 1527 during the Italian Wars (1494–1559) when troops loyal to Emperor Charles V (as king of Spain, Charles I), frustrated over back pay owed them, went on a protracted rampage.

of the victory, is to save the greatest possible number of vanquished and free them from the cruelty of their allies. Now compare these qualities of prudence, skill, magnanimity, moderation, humanity, and religion with those of those little men of America in whom one can scarcely find any remnants of humanity. They not only lack culture but do not even use or know about writing or preserve records of their history — save for some obscure memory of certain deeds contained in painting. They lack written laws and their institutions and customs are barbaric. And as for their virtues, if you wish to be informed of their moderation and mildness, what can be expected of men committed to all kinds of passion and nefarious lewdness and of whom not a few are given to the eating of human flesh. Do not believe that their life before the coming of the Spaniards was one of Saturnine⁴ peace, of the kind that poets sang about. On the contrary, they made war with each other almost continuously, and with such fury that they considered a victory to be empty if they could not satisfy their prodigious hunger with the flesh of their enemies. This form of cruelty is especially prodigious among these people, remote as they are from the invincible ferocity of the Scythians,⁵ who also ate human bodies. But in other respects they are so cowardly and timid that they can scarcely offer any resistance to the hostile presence of our side, and many times thousands and thousands of them have been dispersed and have fled like women on being defeated by a small Spanish force scarcely amounting to one hundred.

So as not to detain you longer in this matter, consider the nature of those people in one single instance and example, that of the Mexicans, who are regarded as the most prudent and courageous.⁶ Their king was Moctezuma, whose empire extended the length and breadth of those regions and who inhabited the city of Mexico, a

city situated in a vast lake, and a very well defended city both on account of the nature of its location and on account of its fortifications. . . . Informed of the arrival of Cortés and of his victories and his intention to go to Mexico under pretext of a conference, Moctezuma sought all possible means to divert him from his plan. Failing in this, terrorized and filled with fear, he received him in the city with about three hundred Spaniards. Cortés for his part, after taking possession of the city, held the people's cowardliness, ineptitude, and rudeness in such contempt that he not only compelled the king and his principal subjects, through terror, to receive the yoke and rule of the king of Spain, but also imprisoned King Moctezuma himself, because of his suspicion that a plot was on foot to kill some Spaniards in a certain province. This he could do because of the stupor and inertia of the people, who were indifferent to the situation and preoccupied with other things than the taking up of arms to liberate their king. . . . Could there be a better or clearer testimony of the superiority that some men have over others in talent, skill, strength of spirit, and virtue? Is it not proof that they are slaves by nature? For the fact that some of them appear to have a talent for certain manual tasks is no argument for their greater human prudence. We see that certain insects, such as the bees and the spiders, produce works that no human skill can imitate. And as for the civil life of the inhabitants of New Spain and the province of Mexico, I have already said that the people are considered to be the most civilized of all. They themselves boast of their public institutions as if it were not a sufficient proof of their industry and civilization that they have rationally constructed cities, and kings appointed by popular suffrage rather than by hereditary right and age, and a commerce like that of civilized people. But see how they deceive themselves and how differ-

⁴Refers to the idea of a golden age.

⁵Originally from central Asia, the Scythians were nomads who moved into southern Russia in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Ancient Greek and Roman historians described them as wild and cruel savages.

⁶On the capitulation of the Aztecs to Cortés, see source 16).

ent is my opinion from theirs, since for me the foremost proof of the rudeness and barbarism and innate servitude of those people lies precisely in their public institutions, nearly all of which are servile and barbarous. They do have houses, and some rational mode of common life, and such commerce as natural necessity demands, but what does this prove other than that they are not bears or monkeys completely lacking in reason?

I have made reference to the customs and character of the barbarians. What shall I say now of the impious religion and wicked sacrifices of such people, who, in venerating the devil as if he were God, believed that the best sacrifice that they could placate him with was to offer him human hearts?⁷ . . . Opening up the human breasts they pulled out the hearts and offered them on their heinous altars. And believing that they had made a ritual sacrifice with which to placate their gods, they themselves ate the flesh of the victims. These are crimes that are considered by the philoso-

phers to be among the most ferocious and abominable perversions, exceeding all human iniquity. . . .

How can we doubt that these people — so uncivilized, so barbaric, contaminated with so many impieties and obscenities — have been justly conquered by a nation excellent in every kind of virtue, with the best law and best benefit for the barbarians? Prior to the arrival of the Christians they had the nature, customs, religion, and practice of evil sacrifice as we have explained. Now, on receiving with our rule our writing, laws, and morality, imbued with the Christian religion, having shown themselves to be docile to the missionaries that we have sent them, as many have done, they are as different from their primitive condition as civilized people are from barbarians, or as those with sight from the blind, as the inhuman from the meek, as the pious from the impious, or to put it in a single phrase, in effect, as men from beasts.

⁷Huitzilopochtli, a sun and war god, was worshipped daily with offerings of blood and hearts torn from the bodies of sacrificed victims.

“They Are Our Brothers”



5 ▼ *Bartolomé de Las Casas,* *IN DEFENSE OF THE INDIANS*

Bartolomé de Las Casas was born into the family of a Spanish merchant in 1474. After abandoning his academic studies for a career of soldiering, he embarked for Hispaniola in 1502 in the entourage of the new governor of the island, Nicolas de Ovando. Las Casas received grants of land from the governor and participated in the conquest of Cuba between 1511 and 1515. In 1515 he renounced his property and rights in the Americas and returned to Spain, where he began to lobby Spanish officials on behalf of the Amerindians. In 1519, with royal approval, he established a cooperative Spanish-Amerindian farming community in Venezuela, but it generated little enthusiasm and the experiment failed. He then joined the Dominican religious order and continued to write and work on behalf of the American Indians while living in Spanish America and traveling regularly back to Spain. His denunciations of alleged Spanish cruelties so struck the conscience of Charles I that the king arranged the debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda in 1550. After the debate Las Casas remained in Spain, where he died in 1566.

The following selection is an excerpt from Las Casas's response to Sepúlveda at the Valladolid debate. Given the title *In Defense of the Indians*, it existed in several Latin manuscript copies but was not published until the twentieth century.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why, according to Las Casas, is it significant that the Indians established effective governments?
2. What is Las Casas's definition of *barbarian*? How does it differ from Sepúlveda's definition?
3. How do Las Casas's historical arguments and views of the Spaniards differ from those of Sepúlveda?
4. What, according to Las Casas, are the implications of Sepúlveda's arguments for international relations?
5. The judges could not decide a winner in the debate. What might explain this?
6. Put yourself in the place of one of the Valladolid judges and write an explanation of why you chose Las Casas or Sepúlveda as the winner of the debate.

However, he admits, and proves, that the barbarians he deals with . . . have a lawful, just, and natural government. Even though they lack the art and use of writing, they are not wanting in the capacity and skill to rule and govern themselves, both publicly and privately. Thus they have kingdoms, communities, and cities that they govern wisely according to their laws and customs. Thus their government is legitimate and natural, even though it has some resemblance to tyranny. From these statements we have no choice but to conclude that the rulers of such nations enjoy the use of reason and that their people and the inhabitants of their provinces do not lack peace and justice. Otherwise they could not be established or preserved as political entities for long. This is made clear by the Philosopher and Augustine.¹ Therefore not all barbarians are irrational or natural slaves or unfit for government. Some barbarians, then, in accord with justice and nature, have kingdoms, royal digni-

ties, jurisdiction, and good laws, and there is among them lawful government.

Now if we shall have shown that among our Indians of the western and southern shores (granting that we call them barbarians and that they are barbarians) there are important kingdoms, large numbers of people who live settled lives in a society, great cities, kings, judges and laws, persons who engage in commerce, buying, selling, lending, and the other contracts of the law of nations, will it not stand proved that the Reverend Doctor Sepúlveda has spoken wrongly and viciously against peoples like these, either out of malice or ignorance of Aristotle's teaching, and, therefore, has falsely and perhaps irreparably slandered them before the entire world? From the fact that the Indians are barbarians it does not necessarily follow that they are incapable of government and have to be ruled by others, except to be taught about the Catholic faith and to be admitted to the holy sacraments.

¹The term *Philosopher* refers to Aristotle; on *Augustine*, see source 4, footnote 1.

They are not ignorant, inhuman, or bestial. Rather, long before they had heard the word Spaniard they had properly organized states, wisely ordered by excellent laws, religion, and custom. They cultivated friendship and, bound together in common fellowship, lived in populous cities in which they wisely administered the affairs of both peace and war justly and equitably, truly governed by laws that at very many points surpass ours, and could have won the admiration of the sages of Athens, as I will show in the second part of this *Defense*.

Now if they are to be subjugated by war because they are ignorant of polished literature, let Sepúlveda hear Trogus Pompey:²

Nor could the Spaniards submit to the yoke of a conquered province until Caesar Augustus, after he had conquered the world, turned his victorious armies against them and organized that barbaric and wild people as a province, once he had led them by law to a more civilized way of life.

Now see how he called the Spanish people barbaric and wild. I would like to hear Sepúlveda, in his cleverness, answer this question: Does he think that the war of the Romans against the Spanish was justified in order to free them from barbarism? And this question also: Did the Spanish wage an unjust war when they vigorously defended themselves against them?

Next, I call the Spaniards who plunder that unhappy people torturers. Do you think that the Romans, once they had subjugated the wild and barbaric peoples of Spain, could with secure right divide all of you among themselves, handing over so many head of both males and females as allotments to individuals? And do you then conclude

that the Romans could have stripped your rulers of their authority and consigned all of you, after you have been deprived of your liberty, to wretched labors, especially in searching for gold and silver lodes and mining and refining the metals? And if the Romans finally did that, as is evident from Diodorus,³ [would you not judge] that you also have the right to defend your freedom, indeed your very life, by war? Sepúlveda, would you have permitted Saint James⁴ to evangelize your own people of Córdoba in that way? For God's sake and man's faith in him, is this the way to impose the yoke of Christ on Christian men? Is this the way to remove wild barbarism from the minds of barbarians? Is it not, rather, to act like thieves, cut-throats, and cruel plunderers and to drive the gentlest of people headlong into despair? The Indian race is not that barbaric, nor are they dull witted or stupid, but they are easy to teach and very talented in learning all the liberal arts, and very ready to accept, honor, and observe the Christian religion and correct their sins (as experience has taught) once priests have introduced them to the sacred mysteries and taught them the word of God. They have been endowed with excellent conduct, and before the coming of the Spaniards, as we have said, they had political states that were well founded on beneficial laws.

Furthermore, they are so skilled in every mechanical art that with every right they should be set ahead of all the nations of the known world on this score, so very beautiful in their skill and artistry are the things this people produces in the grace of its architecture, its painting, and its needlework. . . .

In the liberal arts that they have been taught up to now, such as grammar and logic, they are

²A Roman historian of the first century B.C.E.; only fragments of his ambitious history of Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, Gaul, and Spain survive.

³A Greek historian of the first century B.C.E.

⁴James, son of Zebedee, was one of the original twelve apostles, or closest followers of Jesus, and suffered martyrdom for his faith in 43 C.E. According to legend, his body

was carried to Spain, where, as St. James "the Moor-Slayer," he became the patron saint of the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula from Islam. The church of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, believed to be the site of his relics, became one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in all of Europe from the late ninth century onward.

remarkably adept. With every kind of music they charm the ears of their audience with wonderful sweetness. They write skillfully and quite elegantly, so that most often we are at a loss to know whether the characters are handwritten or printed. . . .

From this it is clear that the basis for Sepúlveda's teaching that these people are uncivilized and ignorant is worse than false. Yet even if we were to grant that this race has no keenness of mind or artistic ability, certainly they are not, in consequence, obliged to submit themselves to those who are more intelligent and to adopt their ways, so that, if they refuse, they may be subdued by having war waged against them and be enslaved, as happens today. . . . We are bound by the natural law to embrace virtue and imitate the uprightness of good men. . . .

Therefore, not even a truly wise man may force an ignorant barbarian to submit to him, especially by yielding his liberty, without doing him an injustice. This the poor Indians suffer, with extreme injustice, against all the laws of God and of men and against the law of nature itself. For evil must not be done that good may come of it, for example, if someone were to castrate another against his will. For although eunuchs are freed from the lust that drives human minds forward in its mad rush, yet he who castrates another is most severely punished. . . .

Now if, on the basis of this utterly absurd argument, war against the Indians were lawful, one nation might rise up against another and one man against another man, and on the pretext of superior wisdom, might strive to bring the other into subjection. On this basis the Turks, and the Moors — the truly barbaric scum of the nations — with complete right and in accord with the law of nature could carry on war, which, as it seems to some, is permitted to us by a lawful decree of the state. If we admit this, will not

everything high and low, divine and human, be thrown into confusion? What can be proposed more contrary to the eternal law than what Sepúlveda often declares? What plague deserves more to be loathed? . . .

Hence every nation, no matter how barbaric, has the right to defend itself against a more civilized one that wants to conquer it and take away its freedom. And, moreover, it can lawfully punish with death the more civilized as a savage and cruel aggressor against the law of nature. And this war is certainly more just than the one that, under pretext of wisdom, is waged against them. . . .

Again, if we want to be sons of Christ and followers of the truth of the gospel, we should consider that, even though these peoples may be completely barbaric, they are nevertheless created in God's image. They are not so forsaken by divine providence that they are incapable of attaining Christ's kingdom. They are our brothers, redeemed by Christ's most precious blood, no less than the wisest and most learned men in the whole world. Finally, we must consider it possible that some of them are predestined to become renowned and glorious in Christ's kingdom. Consequently, to these men who are wild and ignorant in their barbarism we owe the right which is theirs, that is, brotherly kindness and Christian love, according to Paul: "I owe a duty to Greeks just as much as to barbarians, to the educated just as much as to the uneducated, and it is this that makes me want to bring the Good News to you too in Rome."⁵ Christ wanted love to be called his single commandment. This we owe to all men. Nobody is excepted. "There is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything."⁶

⁵From Paul's Letter to the Romans, 1:14, 15.

⁶From Paul's Letter to the Colossians, 3:17.

Women's Roles in Early Modern Europe

The popular assumption that Europe's transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and early modern period was marked by general progress is contradicted by the experiences of most European women. Although medieval women were far from having equality with men, they enjoyed more freedom and higher status than in antiquity and the postmedieval period. Aristocratic women in the Middle Ages owned land and managed their family's estates when their husbands were on military campaigns. Urban women joined guilds, were apprenticed to learn craft skills, and in some cities monopolized whole professions, such as leatherworking, brewing, and especially textile weaving and finishing. Religious women were admired for their charity and piety, and some achieved distinction as models of spirituality.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, the era that saw the decline of medieval civilization and the flowering of the Renaissance in Italy, women's economic and social prospects began to deteriorate, and continued to do so in the early modern period. In cities guilds excluded women from membership, and municipal councils barred women from receiving payment for work as physicians and apothecaries. For city women work increasingly meant domestic service, spinning, shopkeeping, or prostitution, all poorly paid jobs with low status. In the countryside women's work was crucial to the peasant household's economic survival, as it had been throughout the Middle Ages. Women tended gardens, raised poultry, helped with planting and harvesting, cooked, preserved food, and cared for children and the elderly. Many also worked for wages as servants or laborers.

Irrespective of a woman's social status, there was universal agreement that her main purpose was to marry and have children. Moralists and religious leaders agreed that matrimony was the foundation of a sound, God-fearing society and offered men and women the best opportunity for fulfillment and happiness. This was especially true among Protestant writers, whose enthusiasm for marriage was linked to their rejection of the Catholic doctrine of clerical celibacy.

During the sixteenth century, however, many writers on the topic were convinced that the institution of marriage was threatened. The age of first marriage in northern and northwestern Europe steadily rose, and the proportion of unmarried individuals throughout Europe grew. Estimates of the number of single European women throughout the 1500s and early 1600s range from 20 to 40 percent, equally divided between spinsters and widows. For those who were married, one gains the impression from contemporary writers and preachers that more and more husbands and wives were unhappy. Writers on the topic agreed that a strong marriage depended on mutual affection and clearly defined responsibilities and rights between spouses, but laws made wives subservient to husbands, and the endless written commentaries on unhappy marriages, abusive

husbands, and disobedient wives suggests that such ideal marriages were far from universal.

Throughout the early modern period learned opinion (generated of course by educated men) continued to emphasize women's intellectual, spiritual, and moral inferiority to men. Although Protestantism encouraged female literacy because it emphasized each Christian's need to read the Bible and the mother's role in teaching religious lessons to her children, Catholic and Protestant universities remained exclusively male, thus effectively barring women from scholarly careers and the learned professions. The deadliest result of women's low status and perceived inferiority was early modern Europe's persecution of witches. Witchcraft was considered a uniquely female crime, and 80 percent or more of those accused and executed as witches were women.

The sources in this section provide insights into several topics relating to women in early modern Europe: marriage, work, and perceptions of their character and social role. All the sources were produced by men. Because of the disparity between male and female literacy and the difficulties women faced in publishing their ideas, few women were able to contribute to the literary discussion of women's roles and capabilities. Nonetheless, in the selections that follow we can get some sense of women's perspectives and expectations.

A Woman of Virtue and Piety



6 ▼ John Mayer, "A PATTERN FOR WOMEN"

In the early 1600s an Englishwoman, Lucy Thornton, died, leaving behind a husband and several young children. John Mayer, an Anglican priest, delivered her eulogy, which was later published as a pamphlet titled "A Pattern for Women." It provides numerous insights into what was expected of Protestant wives and mothers in the patriarchal society of early seventeenth-century England. Mayer opened his eulogy by praising Lucy Thornton's religious zeal and then goes on to describe her other virtues.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are the qualities of Lucy Thornton's life that make her in Mayer's view a "pattern for women"?
2. In what ways did Thornton show her human weaknesses and shortcomings?
3. In what ways is Mayer's praise for Thornton indirect criticism of most other women?
4. What does Mayer's eulogy reveal about the subservience of women in the family and in society in general?

She was anointed with wisdom, as Abigail,¹ who is said to be of excellent understanding. . . . Such was her understanding as that she could readily recite fit texts of Scripture for any purpose and find them out; and for harder places, by singular labor she attained good skill herein. . . .

She was anointed with true love, causing in her plenty of good works; as in Dorcas,² her love was exceeding great both towards God and towards her neighbor. Of God, her love was so great that she burnt with the fire of earnest zeal for his glory, stoutly (even beyond the strength of her sex) opposing sin and maintaining virtue in those that were about her. . . . For the love of God, she kept a continual watch over her ways, lest she should offend against his holy will; no child is more afraid of offending the father or master than she of offending God. Because that, notwithstanding all watches, sin cannot altogether be kept out, she was not a little troubled for her frailties and falls, being always glad when the Lord took the matter into his own hands by chastising her with sickness; for then, and in health time also, she did much complain of her sins and forgetfulness for which it was necessary to be corrected. . . .

Of her neighbor she had also a true love, not in word but in deed. She had love of almsdeeds which she plentifully performed to the poor. . . . From her youth up, the poor were nourished up with her; their lives blessed her, for that they were kept warm with her fleeces. Whilst she lived, the hungry could not go unfed, the naked unclothed, the sick unvisited. . . . She showed love by admonishing the disorderly, instructing the ignorant, and exhorting the backward in religion, by all means provoking to love and good works.

She was anointed with humility, as Mary the blessed mother of Christ who, being so highly graced by God, yet acknowledgeth herself his humble handmaiden. . . . She despised the ornaments of vanity, which other women so much delight in; her outward habit did show the inward lowliness and modesty of her mind. She strove against the sharpness of her natural disposition, and by striving did attain a great measure of meekness and gentleness. . . .

She was anointed with due subjection to her own husband, as Sarah,³ who revered her husband, whose example is most earnestly commended by St. Peter⁴ to all wives. . . . promising that thus they become the daughters of Sarah, not being terrified with any fear. Wherefore, having this virtue also added, she was doubtless without fear steadfast in the faith of her salvation.

Unruly wives . . . have such a mist or dark cloud of black sins before their eyes as that they cannot see this salvation. They may have hope indeed, but their hope is presumption, the end of which is damnation.

Now as this elect servant of God was beautified with these graces in her health, so they remained in her without being dimmed in her last sickness.

For heavenly zeal, she gave a sure instance hereof in the beginning of this sickness by commanding her servants not to trouble her with any worldly affairs, for now she would wholly be settled to heaven. And indeed she lay in her sickbed as in heaven, full of heavenly speeches and of heavenly comfort. Now all her practice was praying, confessing of sins, singing Psalms, and godly conference.

For wisdom, when strength of body failed her, this was strong yet in her even unto the end;

¹One of the wives of King David (?1010–970 B.C.E.), the second king of Israel and the reputed author of many of the *Psalms*.

²Dorcas, also known as Tabitha, was an early Christian convert mentioned in the New Testament Book of Acts. She was noted for her good works and charity.

³The wife of the biblical patriarch Abraham; she represents loyalty, hope, and God's promise to His people.

⁴Peter was the most prominent of Jesus' disciples. The two Epistles of Peter in the New Testament are ascribed to him, although the attribution is questioned. The reference to wives can be found in I Peter 3:16.

most wisely she spoke to everything, with much understanding producing sundry places of the holy Scriptures. Being much troubled for her sins and buffeted by the temptations of Satan, she

said that she had yet much assurance because that "Come unto me," saith the Lord, "all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

Two Sixteenth-Century Images of Women



7 ▼ *Anton Woensam,*

ALLEGORY OF A WISE WOMAN;

Erhard Schön, NO MORE PRECIOUS

TREASURE IS ON THE EARTH THAN A

GENTLE WIFE WHO LONGS FOR HONOR

Hundreds of thousands of sixteenth-century Europeans were introduced to the new technology of printing, not through books but through the broadsheet. Printed on a single sheet and usually consisting of a woodcut illustration and a brief text, these inexpensive publications were designed for the mass market. As seen earlier in the chapter, such broadsheets were used as instruments of propaganda in the Reformation, especially by Protestants. But broadsheets were not limited to religious issues. They were also instruments of satire, social commentary, and moral instruction, and a way of communicating news about murders, witchcraft trials, astronomical portents, monsters, strange births, and countless other events and phenomena.

The following broadsheets, both produced in Germany, address the issue of female virtue and relations between husbands and wives. The first is by Anton Woensam (ca. 1500–1541), a Catholic painter and woodblock carver from Cologne, whose *Allegory of a Wise Woman* appeared in 1525. The second is the work of Erhard Schön (ca. 1491–1550), a Protestant from Nuremberg, who produced hundreds of woodcuts for book illustrations and broadsheets. His woodcut, *No More Precious Treasure Is on the Earth Than a Gentle Wife Who Longs for Honor*, appeared in 1531. In neither case is the author of the text known.

Each of these woodcuts is simple and straightforward. The "wise woman" in Woensam's woodcut explains in the text the significance of her various attributes and of the objects she is holding or are attached to her. In Schön's woodcut one sees from left to right the husband (pulling a cart that is carrying a laundry tub, probably filled with diapers), the wife, a young man, his sweetheart, an old woman wearing a fool's cap, and finally an old man. In the text, they present their views on marriage.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is the meaning of the various objects (the lock, key, mirror, bird, snakes, pillow, vessel) included in Woensam's woodcut?

2. How do the horse's hooves in Woensam's work shed light on the woodcut's portrayal of women?
3. What meaning do you see in the posture, dress, and facial expression of the woman in Woensam's print?
4. What are the most important qualities of a "wise woman" according to Woensam?
5. What qualities of his wife does the husband in Schön's woodcut (p. 33) most bitterly complain about?
6. What is the significance of the britches, purse, and sword that the wife holds in Schön's print?
7. According to Schön, how does the wife justify her actions and behavior? How do her justifications compare to the expectations about marriage set forth by the young girl?
8. Compare and contrast the arguments for and against marriage presented by the old man and the female fool in Schön's print. To what extent do the comments of the old man confirm the fears about marriage expressed by the young man?
9. Taking the two woodcuts together, describe all they say about sixteenth-century views of women and men and their roles in society.

ALLEGORY OF A WISE WOMAN

Contemplate this figure which signifies a wise woman;
a woman who behaves like her protects her honor well.

Eyes

I see as keenly as a hawk
And discern the pious ones from the scoundrels.
I guard myself both day and night
From one who plots against my honor.

Ears

I will not be discouraged
From opening my ears
So that they can hear God's word.
Which keeps the pious on their guard.

Right Hand

Pride I will despise
And behold myself in the mirror of Christ,
Through whom God has redeemed us.

Mouth

I wear a lock of gold upon my lips
All hours of the day and night
So that they say no harmful words
Or wound another's honor.

Breast

Also I keep a steady heart
Similar to what a turtledove does.
And to the one who will be my husband
I will be true no matter what his faults.

Waist

With serpents I gird my body.
This an upright woman should do
Who wants to protect herself from
Poisonous scandal, evil love and shameful play.

Left Hand

I shall gladly serve the poor
And thereby earn eternal life.
For I cannot find anything else
To do differently to bring this about.

Feet

On horses' hoofs shall I go about
So I can stand firm in honor.
On this I will not fall into sin
Which is sweet, but turns as bitter as gall.

Any woman who has such morals
Will never damage her honor
And surely merit from God
An eternal kingdom in heaven.



Anton Woensam, Allegory of a Wise Woman

NO MORE PRECIOUS TREASURE

The Wretched Idol {the Husband}

Oh woe, oh woe to me, wretched fool,
With what difficulty I pull this cart
To which point marriage has brought me.
I wish I had never thought of it!
A shrewish scold has come into my house

and has taken my sword, pants and purse.
Night and day I have no peace
And no good word from her.
My fidelity does not please her;
My words provoke hostility from her.
Thus is the fate of many a man
Who has, knows and can do nothing,
And yet in time must have a wife.

The Wife Speaks

Hey, beloved mate, but is this really true?
Be quiet! Or I will pull you by the hair.
If you want a nice and gentle wife
Who will always be subservient to you
Then stay at home in your own house
And stop your carousing.
Naked I go running around to peddle things,
Suffering from hunger and quaffing water.
It's difficult for a nice young wife
To maintain her wifely honor.
If you won't work to support me,
Then you have to wash, spin and pull the cart
And must let your back be bared.

The Journeyman

What do you say about this, young lady?
Would you like to be like her
And yourself hold sword, pants, purse and au-
thority?
With words bite, rasp and cut?

That I should and would never suffer.
Should I fight and brawl with you,
Then perhaps I would end up
Pulling a cart like this poor man,
Who has lost all joy and pleasure.
Should I waste my life of freedom
With spinning, washing, cooking and carting?
I would rather swear off from taking up mar-
riage.

The Girl

Boy, believe me on my honor.
I don't wish for such power.
If you want to fight over rank,
Then you will be the man in all things.
What a wife deserves,
To love, to experience hardship together and
honor,
I will demand nothing besides this.
You should have no doubt about it.
I will devote my life to serving you



Erhard Schön, No More Precious Treasure Is on the Earth Than a Gentle Wife Who Longs for Honor

And love you in constant friendship.
And you won't be scolded by a single word.

The Woman Fool

Watch yourself, young man.
I, a poor fool speak the truth.
Much good is said about marriage
But it means more correctly "Woe."
You must suffer 'til you die
Much anxiety, uncertainty, worry and want.
From this no married person is spared.
Now when you see a pretty girl,
She will gladly do what you want
For a bottle of wine.
Afterwards you can let her go
And take on another.
A wife you have forever.

The Wise Man

Young man I will teach you better.
Do not listen to this woman fool.
Beware of the tricks of whores,
Who are always there to deceive you.
Take a young lady into marriage.
God will guide your lives.
Stay with her in love and pain
And always be patient.
If you experience aggravation,
Consider it to be God's will.
Provide for your wife by the sweat of your brow,
As God commands in the Book of Genesis.
Patience and suffering make a door
Through which we arrive at that place
Where the angels have their home.

Midwives and Their Duties



8 ▼ *NUREMBERG ORDINANCES CONCERNING MIDWIVES, 1522, 1579*

Among the hundreds of occupations of early modern European women, only one was considered absolutely essential to the well-being of society. This was the woman's role as midwife. Although male apothecaries, barber-surgeons, and university-trained physicians in the early modern period had worked hard and successfully to exclude women from most health-related careers, they were more than happy to leave the physically and emotionally demanding job of providing prenatal care and delivering babies to female midwives and their assistants. Although physicians and barber-surgeons might be called upon to perform caesarean sections or attend a woman dying in childbirth, what we call today the fields of gynecology and obstetrics were exclusive female specialties.

So essential were midwives that municipal governments in many parts of Europe took steps to ensure the quality of obstetrical care by regulating the apprenticeship, recruitment, licensing, and practices of midwives. In Germany many cities also appointed a special board to oversee the activities of midwives and adjudicate disputes. Usually drawn from upper-class families, board members were known as "honorable women," or *Ehrbare Frauen*. City governments also provided modest stipends for midwives (two to eight *gulden* a year, compared to ten to twenty-five *gulden* paid to barber-surgeons), which could be augmented by fees collected from patients.

The following excerpts are drawn from an ordinance concerning midwives issued by the Nuremberg city council in 1522 and an addendum to that ordi-

nance from 1579. Nuremberg was a prosperous Lutheran city in south central Germany with a population of approximately forty thousand during the early modern period. The number of practicing midwives in the city ranged between eight and twenty-two, with the most experienced of them attending three to five births a week. The excerpts provide insights into the responsibilities of midwives, the perceived abuses connected with their activities, and the penchant of municipal governments to minutely regulate the activities of their citizens.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What specific information does the source provide concerning the duties of midwives and their training?
2. What are the main concerns of the members of the Nuremberg city council relating to midwives and their practices?
3. On the basis of these documents what can be inferred about the social background of midwives in Nuremberg and their status?
4. What does the source reveal about contemporary attitudes toward illegitimate births?
5. What attitudes toward the welfare and capabilities of women are revealed in these documents?

Every midwife should give her oath and swear she will conscientiously care for and stand by every expectant mother in her time of need to whom she is called, whether she is rich or poor, to the best of her abilities and understanding. She should proceed to whomever she is called first, immediately and without objection, and make absolutely no excuses or delays, as has often been the case, but faithfully stand by her. Also no woman is to be hurried or forced to deliver before the proper time; she should wait and hold out until the appropriate time.

If the thing [the delivery] looks like it will be dangerous, she should call one or two of the women who are responsible for this¹ and proceed with the emergency according to their advice. In no case is she to wait or delay to call them until the need is so great they cannot handle it, or she will warrant serious punishment.

If it happens that the birth takes so long and the first midwife has a pressing need to rest or

sleep for a while, she should call another sworn midwife and not an apprentice, who will then be just as responsible to appear immediately without opposition. She should then steadfastly and helpfully care for the woman in labor just as if she had been called at first. . . .

If any midwives show themselves to be disobedient or disagreeable, the council will not only remove them from office, but will also punish them severely, so that all will know to shape up and watch their behavior. . . .

From now on no midwife will be allowed to take on an apprentice who has begun with a different midwife and left her without justifiable cause, but every apprentice shall stay with the woman with whom she started. Justifiable and legitimate cause for leaving may be proven to the council or to those appointed by it. In such cases, the apprentice will not be forbidden to complete her training years with another sworn midwife. In this case, the woman that caused the

¹The "honorable women," or *Ehrbare Frauen*.

apprentice to leave through her unfairness and unreasonableness will not be allowed to take on another apprentice until the end of the training years of the first.

They should not take on any flighty, young apprentices, as it so often happens that they marry during the course of their training and that all sorts of injuries result from their inexperience. They should rather take on apprentices well advanced in years and preferably living alone, from whom one expects more diligence than from younger ones.

They should also not allow themselves to drink wine in excess, as all kinds of injury and harm have been inflicted on the pregnant women because of this. The council has decided to punish severely any who break this restriction.

The honorable council has discovered that the midwives often send their maids (that have not completed their instruction or that have just completed it and have no experience yet) alone to women who are giving birth for the first time, through which these women are often neglected and deplorably injured. Therefore the honorable council orders that from now on no maid, whether she has half-completed her training or not, is to attend alone any woman bearing her first or second child, whether she goes with the knowledge of her instructor or not. After the passing of the normal years of training, the apprentice shall carry out her first birth in the presence of her instructor. . . .

The high honorable council has also had enough of midwives taking their proper salary for poor women not only from the established overseer of the charity² but also from the women themselves, and therefore receive double payment. This gives the honorable council great displeasure. Because of this the midwives are to swear that when they receive their proper salary from the overseer for caring for a poor woman, they are not to demand or want anything more, but let themselves be completely satisfied with

their established salary. All of this is liable to punishment which the high honorable council will set each time according to the crime and opportunities of the case.

Recently evil cases have taken place, that those women who live in sin and adultery have illegitimate children, and during birth or before purposefully attempt to kill them by taking harmful, abortion-causing drugs, or through other notorious means. Some of these cases never come to the attention of the authorities, and proper punishment for them cannot be carried out. This the high honorable council, because of the God-given authority it carries, can no longer tolerate. Therefore they have made the recommendation that the midwives' oath be added to. They are to swear yearly, that when one of them is called to deliver a baby for such a woman, one who is carrying an illegitimate child, she [the midwife] is obliged to ask what the name of the child's mother is, and who the child's father is. As soon as she has brought the child into the world, she is to report to the Lord Mayor whether the child is alive or dead, who its mother and father are, and where the mother is lying in bed. Also no dead illegitimate children are to be carried to the grave before she gives her report to the Lord Mayor. At least three or four female persons are to go with the child to the grave. If one or more of the midwives act against this, and will not comply with what has been sent forth above, the high honorable council will deal with them as perjurers with corporal punishment. Then they will finally know to conform to this.

▼ ▼ ▼

On the request of the sworn midwives to the high honorable council to improve their ordinance in several various points this further pronouncement is to be published, to bring the following improvements to their ordinances. . . .

²The city council had established a special fund, the *Arme Kindbetter Almosen*, for poor expectant mothers.

The midwives have sworn in their oaths not to send or use an apprentice during her normal training years to a woman having her first baby, but have requested to have this limited to only the first quarter-year. The high honorable council believes this to be much too short a time, and will set the limit at one year. Therefore from now on no midwife should send a maid to a woman having her first child unless she has completed one year of her training program. . . .

Some women have allowed their little children to be carried to holy baptism by strange people when the midwife was too busy, although such small children are easily harmed and injured. Therefore, the high honorable council orders that from now on all new-born children are to be carried to holy baptism by their sworn midwife or her apprentice. Any midwife will be fined . . . if she breaks this ordinance.

No midwife is to take on a maid-apprentice without the knowledge of the *Ehrbare Frauen*. No maid-apprentice is to be accepted who is married or has her own household, but only those who are single or widowed, so that these persons are not called away from their instructors to their private business or housework, and will always

be available. They should not live in the midwife's house, but in the neighborhood, and should keep themselves occupied at all times.

The high honorable council has discovered that some of the midwives are taking all or half of the tips that have been given to their maid-apprentices by people, which leads to all sorts of lack of diligence and care among the maids. In order to prevent this, the high honorable council has decided that from now on all that a maid receives for herself from a child's mother, father, relatives or others, that has been given willingly above the normal payments, should remain the maid's and she is not to be required to give any to her mistress. . . .

The high honorable council has also discovered that some midwives have no maid-apprentices, with the result that when the old midwives die no qualified people may be appointed to their posts. In order to improve this the high honorable council seriously asks all midwives who have completed the training period with one or more maids to take on another capable one in their place a quarter or at longest a half year later.

An Expanding Intellectual Universe

Although European intellectuals during the Middle Ages and Renaissance had many disagreements and controversies, all but a few shared a number of basic beliefs and assumptions. They believed that Christianity, as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church, provided a complete revelation of God's purposes and true and perfect guidelines for human conduct. All of them revered antiquity. They looked to the Greeks for guidance in logic, philosophy, and natural science and to the Romans for inspiration in literature, government, and law. All believed that the earth was the center of the universe, and that on earth Catholic Christians came closest to realizing God's design for humanity.

During the sixteenth century European thinkers were forced to re-evaluate every one of these assumptions. The secularism of the Renaissance, the religious divisions caused by the Reformation, new scientific discoveries, and surprising encounters with Africans, Asians, and Amerindians all challenged Europe's intellectual assumptions. As one revered authority after another was questioned, intellectuals' reactions ranged from dogmatism to skepticism to bewilderment.

No serious European thinker was immune from the unsettling new ideas and events of the age.

This section begins with an essay by the sixteenth-century French writer Michel de Montaigne, whose personal experiences, studies, and observations led him to question facile generalizations and unexamined assumptions. The section concludes with a letter by Galileo Galilei, one of the scientific giants of the age. His career came to symbolize conflict between science and religion, which in his case reached a climax in his famous controversy with the Roman Catholic Church in the 1620s and 1630s. Thus both authors were products of the intellectual tensions of the age and contributed to them.

Who Is the True Barbarian?



9 ▼ *Michel de Montaigne, "ON CANNIBALS"*

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), one of the most influential figures in all of European literature, was the son of a Bordeaux merchant who had recently purchased both a title of nobility and a rural estate. After studying law at the University of Toulouse and serving as a counselor for several courts of law in the province of Bordeaux, Montaigne retired after his father's death in 1568 to his family estate where he planned to read, meditate, and write. He successfully followed his plan, interrupting it only for travel, occasional forays into politics, and brief entanglements in the French Wars of Religions, which persisted through most of his adult life. Although he died a Catholic, he belonged to the faction known as the *politiques*, whose members believed that religious toleration and strong princely rule provided the only means of saving France from destructive religious and factional rivalries.

Montaigne invented the essay as a literary genre. To Montaigne the essay was, as it is today, a short prose composition that treats a given subject in a personal and informal way. The English term is derived from the French word *essai*, meaning an attempt, trial, or experiment. An essay, therefore, offered Montaigne an opportunity to test and explore his ideas rather than transmit absolute truths. It was the perfect genre for a man who distrusted dogmatism and believed that truth needed continuing reassessment. Montaigne published three books of essays, which contained a total of 107 chapters. "On Cannibals," published in his first book of essays, was written sometime between 1578 and 1580.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is Montaigne's definition of barbarism?
2. In what sense do the people of Brazil and the Europeans fulfill this definition?
3. How does Montaigne's description of the Brazilians' reactions to European customs fit into the overall theme of the essay?

4. If Montaigne had been given an opportunity to examine the arguments of Las Casas and Sepúlveda, would he have agreed with either of them? Explain your answer.
5. What implications does Montaigne's essay have for Christianity, especially Christian ethical doctrine?

I had with me for a long time a man who had lived for ten or twelve years in that other world which has been discovered in our century, in the place where Villegaignon landed, and which he called Antarctic France.¹ This discovery of a boundless country seems worthy of consideration. . . .

This man I had was a simple, crude fellow — a character fit to bear true witness; for clever people observe more things and more curiously, but they interpret them; and to lend weight and conviction to their interpretation, they cannot help altering history a little. . . . Such was my man; and besides this, he at various times brought sailors and merchants, whom he had known on that trip, to see me. So I content myself with his information, without inquiring what the cosmographers say about it. . . .

Now, to return to my subject, I think there is nothing barbarous and savage in that nation, from what I have been told, except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice; for indeed it seems we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and customs of the country we live in. *There* is always the perfect religion, the perfect government, the perfect and accomplished manners in all things. Those people are wild, just as we call wild the fruits that Nature has produced by herself and in her normal course; whereas really it is those that we have changed artificially and led astray from the common order, that we should rather call wild. The former retain alive and vigorous their genuine, their most useful and natural, virtues and properties, which we have

debased in the latter in adapting them to gratify our corrupted taste. . . .

These nations, then, seem to me barbarous in this sense, that they have been fashioned very little by the human mind, and are still very close to their original naturalness. The laws of nature still rule them, very little corrupted by ours; and they are in such a state of purity that I am sometimes vexed that they were unknown earlier, in the days when there were men able to judge them better than we. . . .

Their buildings are very long, with a capacity of two or three hundred souls; they are covered with the bark of great trees, the strips reaching to the ground at one end and supporting and leaning on one another at the top, in the manner of some of our barns, whose covering hangs down to the ground and acts as a side. They have wood so hard that they cut with it and make of it their swords and grills to cook their food. Their beds are of a cotton weave, hung from the roof like those in our ships, each man having his own; for the wives sleep apart from their husbands.

They get up with the sun, and eat immediately upon rising, to last them through the day; for they take no other meal than that one. . . . Their drink is made of some root, and is of the color of our claret wines. They drink it only lukewarm. . . . In place of bread they use a certain white substance like preserved coriander. I have tried it; it tastes sweet and a little flat.

The whole day is spent in dancing. The younger men go to hunt animals with bows. Some of the women busy themselves meanwhile with warming their drink, which is their chief

¹Antarctic France was a term that referred to the area of modern Brazil. *Antarctic* is used in the sense of "opposite of

the Arctic," or "toward the south," that is, this region lay south of the kingdom of France.

duty. Some one of the old men, in the morning before they begin to eat, preaches to the whole barnful in common, walking from one end to the other, and repeating one single sentence several times until he has completed the circuit (for the buildings are fully a hundred paces long). He recommends to them only two things: valor against the enemy and love for their wives. . . .

They have some sort of priests and prophets, but they rarely appear before the people, having their home in the mountains. On their arrival there is a great feast and solemn assembly of several villages — each barn, as I have described it, makes up a village, and they are about one French league from each other. The prophet speaks to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty; but their whole ethical science contains only these two articles: resoluteness in war and affection for their wives. . . .

They have their wars with the nations beyond the mountains, further inland, to which they go quite naked, with no other arms than bows or wooden swords ending in a sharp point, in the manner of the tongues of our boar spears. It is astonishing what firmness they show in their combats, which never end but in slaughter and bloodshed; for as to routs and terror, they know nothing of either.

Each man brings back as his trophy the head of the enemy he has killed, and sets it up at the entrance to his dwelling. After they have treated their prisoners well for a long time with all the hospitality they can think of, each man who has a prisoner calls a great assembly of his acquaintances. He ties a rope to one of the prisoner's arms, by the end of which he holds him, a few steps away, for fear of being hurt, and gives his dearest friend the other arm to hold in the same way; and these two, in the presence of the whole assembly, kill him with their swords. This done, they roast him and eat him in common and send some pieces to their absent friends. . . .

I am not sorry that we notice the barbarous horror of such acts, but I am heartily sorry that,

judging their faults rightly, we should be so blind to our own. I think there is more barbarity in eating a man alive than in eating him dead; and in tearing by tortures and the rack a body still full of feeling, in roasting a man bit by bit, in having him bitten and mangled by dogs and swine (as we have not only read but seen within fresh memory, not among ancient enemies, but among neighbors and fellow citizens, and what is worse, on the pretext of piety and religion), than in roasting and eating him after he is dead. . . .

So we may well call these people barbarians, in respect to the rules of reason, but not in respect to ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarity. . . .

Three of these men, ignorant of the price they will pay some day, in loss of repose and happiness, for gaining knowledge of the corruptions of this side of the ocean; ignorant also of the fact that of this intercourse will come their ruin (which I suppose is already well advanced: poor wretches, to let themselves be tricked by the desire for new things, and to have left the serenity of their own sky to come and see ours!) — three of these men were at Rouen, at the time the late King Charles IX² was there. The king talked to them for a long time; they were shown our ways, our splendor, the aspect of a fine city. After that, someone asked their opinion, and wanted to know what they had found most amazing. They mentioned three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and I am very sorry for it; but I still remember two of them. They said that in the first place they thought it very strange that so many grown men, bearded, strong, and armed, who were around the king (it is likely that they were talking about the Swiss of his guard) should submit to obey a child, and that one of them was not chosen to command instead. Second (they have a way in their language of speaking of men as halves of one another), they had noticed that there were among us men full and gorged with all sorts of good things, and

²Charles IX was ten years old when he became king in 1570. He died in 1574.

that their other halves were beggars at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these needy halves could endure such an injustice, and did not take the others by the throat, or set fire to their houses.

I had a very long talk with one of them; but I had an interpreter who followed my meaning so badly, and who was so hindered by his stupidity in taking in my ideas, that I could get hardly any satisfaction from the man. When I asked him what profit he gained from his superior position among his people (for he was a captain, and our

sailors called him king), he told me that it was to march foremost in war. How many men followed him? He pointed to a piece of ground, to signify as many as such a space could hold; it might have been four or five thousand men. Did all his authority expire with the war? He said that this much remained, that when he visited the villages dependent on him, they made paths for him through the underbrush by which he might pass quite comfortably.

All this is not too bad — but what's the use? They don't wear breeches.

Science and the Claims of Religion



10 ▼ *Galileo Galilei,* *LETTER TO THE* *GRAND DUCHESS CHRISTINA*

The greatest European scientist in the early 1600s was the Italian physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). His most important work was in mechanics, in which he developed the theory of inertia and described the laws that dictate the movement of falling bodies. In astronomy he pioneered the use of the telescope and defended the theory of a sun-centered universe, advanced by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus in 1543. His public support of Copernicus disturbed Catholic clergymen and theologians, who were convinced it threatened correct belief and the authority of the Church.

In 1615 Galileo, a devout Catholic, defended his approach to science in a published letter addressed to Christina, the grand duchess of Tuscany. In the short run Galileo lost his case. The Church officially condemned Copernican theory in 1616 and forced Galileo to renounce many of his ideas in 1632. His works continued to be read, however, and in the long run his writings contributed to the acceptance of Copernican theory and the new methodology of science.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Galileo characterize the motives of his enemies? Why in his view do they use religious arguments against him?
2. According to Galileo, why is it dangerous to apply passages of scripture to science?
3. To Galileo, how does nature differ from the Bible as a source of truth?
4. In Galileo's view, what is the proper relationship between science and religion?

Some years ago, as Your Serene Highness well knows, I discovered in the heavens many things that had not been seen before our own age. The novelty of these things, as well as some consequences which followed from them in contradiction to the physical notions commonly held among academic philosophers, stirred up against me no small number of professors — as if I had placed these things in the sky with my own hands in order to upset nature and overturn the sciences. They seemed to forget that the increase of known truths stimulates the investigation, establishment, and growth of the arts; not their diminution or destruction.

Showing a greater fondness for their own opinions than for truth, they sought to deny and disprove the new things which, if they had cared to look for themselves, their own senses would have demonstrated to them. To this end they hurled various charges and published numerous writings filled with vain arguments, and they made the grave mistake of sprinkling these with passages taken from places in the Bible which they had failed to understand properly, and which were ill suited to their purposes.

Persisting in their original resolve to destroy me and everything mine by any means they can think of, these men are aware of my views in astronomy and philosophy. They know that as to the arrangement of the parts of the universe, I hold the sun to be situated motionless in the center of the revolution of the celestial orbs while the earth rotates on its axis and revolves about the sun. They know also that I support this position not only by refuting the arguments of Ptolemy¹ and Aristotle, but by producing many counter-arguments; in particular, some which relate to physical effects whose causes can perhaps be assigned in no other way. In addition there are astronomical arguments derived from

many things in my new celestial discoveries that plainly confute the Ptolemaic system while admirably agreeing with and confirming the contrary hypothesis. Possibly because they are disturbed by the known truth of other propositions of mine which differ from those commonly held, and therefore mistrusting their defense so long as they confine themselves to the field of philosophy, these men have resolved to fabricate a shield for their fallacies out of the mantle of pretended religion and the authority of the Bible. These they apply, with little judgment, to the refutation of arguments that they do not understand and have not even listened to.

First they have endeavored to spread the opinion that such propositions in general are contrary to the Bible and are consequently damnable and heretical. . . . Next, becoming bolder, and hoping (though vainly) that this seed which first took root in their hypocritical minds would send out branches and ascend to heaven, they began scattering rumors among the people that before long this doctrine would be condemned by the supreme authority.² They know, too, that official condemnation would not only suppress the two propositions which I have mentioned, but would render damnable all other astronomical and physical statements and observations that have any necessary relation or connection with these. . . .

To this end they make a shield of their hypocritical zeal for religion. They go about invoking the Bible, which they would have minister to their deceitful purposes. Contrary to the sense of the Bible and the intention of the holy Fathers, if I am not mistaken, they would extend such authorities until even in purely physical matters — where faith is not involved — they would have us altogether abandon reason and the evidence of our senses in favor of some biblical

¹Ptolemy (ca. 100 to 170 C.E.) spent most of his life in Alexandria, Egypt, and was the Greek astronomer who propounded key aspects of the geocentric planetary system that prevailed in Europe until the time of Copernicus.

²The pope.

passage, though under the surface meaning of its words this passage may contain a different sense.

I hope to show that I proceed with much greater piety than they do, when I argue not against condemning this book, but against condemning it in the way they suggest — that is, without understanding it, weighing it, or so much as reading it. . . .

The reason produced for condemning the opinion that the earth moves and the sun stands still is that in many places in the Bible one may read that the sun moves and the earth stands still. Since the Bible cannot err, it follows as a necessary consequence that anyone takes an erroneous and heretical position who maintains that the sun is inherently motionless and the earth movable.

With regard to this argument, I think in the first place that it is very pious to say and prudent to affirm that the holy Bible can never speak untruth — whenever its true meaning is understood. But I believe nobody will deny that it is often very abstruse, and may say things which are quite different from what its bare words signify. Hence in expounding the Bible if one were always to confine oneself to the unadorned grammatical meaning, one might fall into error. Not only contradictions and propositions far from true might thus be made to appear in the Bible, but even grave heresies and follies. Thus it would be necessary to assign to God feet, hands, and eyes, as well as corporeal and human affections, such as anger, repentance, hatred, and sometimes even

the forgetting of things past and ignorance of those to come. These propositions uttered by the Holy Ghost were set down in that manner by the sacred scribes³ in order to accommodate them to the capacities of the common people, who are rude and unlearned. . . .

This being granted, I think that in discussions of physical problems we ought to begin not from the authority of scriptural passages but from sense-experiences and necessary demonstrations; for the holy Bible and the phenomena of nature proceed alike from the divine Word, the former as the dictate of the Holy Ghost and the latter as the observant executrix of God's commands. It is necessary for the Bible, in order to be accommodated to the understanding of every man, to speak many things which appear to differ from the absolute truth so far as the bare meaning of the words is concerned. But Nature, on the other hand, is inexorable and immutable; she never transgresses the laws imposed upon her, or cares a whit whether her abstruse reasons and methods of operation are understandable to men. For that reason it appears that nothing physical which sense-experience sets before our eyes, or which necessary demonstrations prove to us, ought to be called in question (much less condemned) upon the testimony of biblical passages which may have some different meaning beneath their words. For the Bible is not chained in every expression to conditions as strict as those which govern all physical effects; nor is God any less excellently revealed in Nature's actions than in the sacred statements of the Bible.

³The Holy Ghost is the third divine person of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost), who sanctifies and inspires humankind. Christians believe the authors of the Bible wrote under the sacred and infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 5

Africa and the Americas

Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries Africa and the Americas became the first areas of the world to experience significant consequences from early modern Europe's expansion. On both sides of the Atlantic the arrival of Europeans resulted in demographic and biological changes, political disruption, and the introduction of new weapons, trade patterns, and religions. But the magnitude of Europe's impact on the two regions was far different — Africa was affected by the Europeans' arrival, but the Americas were transformed.

The European presence in Africa primarily meant trade — in gold, ivory, and spices, and a mounting number of human beings. By the 1500s slaves had become the most lucrative commodity for European traders on Africa's west coast. In the eighteenth century, more than six million enslaved Africans were transported to the New World. Even then, most of the rest of the continent was still unaffected by the European presence, and in central West Africa, where slaving was most intense, Europeans stayed on the coast, content to have Africans bring them slaves for purchase and transport to the Americas. European colonization of sub-Saharan Africa did not begin until 1652, when Dutch farmers began to settle on the southernmost tip of the continent. As a result of all these factors, the arrival of Europeans in Africa had relatively little effect on the continent's politics, culture, and religious life.

In the Americas, however, the Europeans' appearance was catastrophic for the indigenous peoples. By 1650 Spaniards and Portuguese ruled and exploited Mexico and Central and South America, and the English, French, Dutch, and other Europeans had begun to settle North America's Atlantic coast and the St. Lawrence River basin. Throughout the Western Hemisphere Native American political structures disintegrated, millions of Amerindians died from Old World diseases,

and traditional patterns of life and belief managed only a tenuous survival.

Why were the experiences of Africa and the Americas so different? In the case of Africa, two factors that discouraged deeper European involvement were diseases such as yellow fever and malaria and the absence of easily navigable rivers from the seacoast to the continent's interior. More significant was the fact that Portugal, which led the way in African exploration and trade, was a small country with limited fiscal resources and during the sixteenth century concentrated its energies on Asia, the source of the ceramics, silks, and spices coveted by Europeans. Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when England, France, and the Netherlands began to trade in Africa, the Africans had firearms and were able to resist European political encroachment.

Europeans faced a far different situation in the Americas. They soon discovered that the region contained easily exploitable sources of wealth such as gold, silver, and furs and was capable of producing profitable agricultural products such as tobacco and sugar. All these things were more or less theirs for the taking, not only in the thinly populated regions of North America and eastern and southern South America, but also in the more populous regions of Mexico, Peru, and the Caribbean.

The ease of the Europeans' conquest of the Americas can be attributed only in part to the initial military advantages afforded by their guns, steel swords, and horses. A more important factor was disease. In Mexico, for example, under normal circumstances several hundred Spaniards, even with their Indian allies, artillery, and arquebuses, would have been no match for thousands of Aztec warriors with arrows, clubs, lances, and spears. But in the midst of their struggle against the Spaniards, the Aztecs were struck by an epidemic of smallpox, a disease contracted from the Spaniards. It was a sorely weakened and demoralized Aztec empire that succumbed to the Spaniards and their Amerindian allies in 1521.

Like the Aztecs all Amerindians had to contend with the bacteria, viruses, and parasites Europeans and Africans carried in their bodies from across the Atlantic. Because of their long isolation they lacked immunity to Old World diseases such as diphtheria, measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, yellow fever, influenza, dysentery, and smallpox. Thus the arrival of Europeans and Africans had immediate and devastating consequences. On the island of Hispaniola, where Columbus established the first Spanish settlement in the New World, the indigenous population plummeted from one

million to only a few thousand by 1530. Within fifty years after the arrival of the Spaniards in Mexico, the region's estimated population fell by 90 percent. No part of the Americas was untouched.

Such human devastation made it relatively easy for the Europeans to conquer or displace the Native Americans. It also led to the enslavement of Africans in the New World. The epidemics created labor shortages that plantation and mine owners sought to overcome by importing enslaved Africans. Before the transatlantic slave trade ended, as many as eleven million Africans were sold into slavery in the Americas and millions more died in slave raids and the holds of slave ships. These Africans too were indirect victims of the bacilli, viruses, and parasites introduced to the New World in the early years of European expansion.

The Diversity of African Societies

Africa's vast size and the wide variety of its climate and topography largely explain the diversity of African societies, especially those south of the Sahara. Although scholars discern certain continentwide commonalities in areas of life such as politics, music, art, and agriculture, Africa lacked any broadly shared cultural tradition of the type that gave unity to Confucian China, Hindu India, and Muslim Southwest Asia.

Thus in the 1500s and 1600s, as had been true for centuries, African governments included large empires, smaller kingdoms, chieftainships, and self-governing city-states. Millions of Africans also lived in stateless societies in which custom and clan leaders provided alternatives to formal government. Most Africans supported themselves economically through agriculture or raising livestock. But Africa's population also included a small number of hunters and gatherers, many skilled artisans, and numerous merchants, some of whom were parts of trade networks that linked Africa commercially to many parts of Eurasia. In religion most Africans were animists who believed in a high creator-god, local divinities, and ancestral spirits. But Africans in Ethiopia were Christians, and many inhabitants of Mediterranean Africa, the Sudan, and the east coast were Muslims. Africans spoke approximately two thousand different languages.

Because traditional non-Christian and non-Muslim African societies left no written records, information about their histories is sparse. Historians have utilized oral traditions, linguistic analysis, and insights from archaeologists, anthropologists, and art historians to reconstruct some of Africa's past but have been unable to sketch the outlines of Africa's early political and cultural development with any precision. Knowledge of Africa increases after the arrival of Europeans, whose letters, diaries, memoirs, and books provide rich sources of information about the societies they encountered.



Africa in 1500

The two selections in this section include one account of Africa written by a European and one written by an African who lived part of his life in Europe. They describe societies in two different parts of the continent — several kingdoms in the Sudan, the region south of the Sahara; and various states and cities on Africa's east coast. They provide a small sample of Africa's rich political, religious, and social diversity.

Africa's Sudanic Kingdoms



11 ▼ *Leo Africanus,* *HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF AFRICA*

Al-Hassan ibn-Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi, better known as Leo Africanus, was probably born in the 1460s in Granada, the last Muslim toehold in Spain, but was raised in Fez (in modern Morocco), where his family migrated in the face of mounting Spanish military pressure. Educated in Islamic law, he entered the service of the sultan of Fez, who sent him on a number of commercial and diplomatic missions, including two trips across sub-Saharan West Africa. Captured by Christian pirates and brought to Rome in 1518, he was presented as a slave to Pope Leo X, who persuaded him to accept Christianity and a new name, Giovanni Leone (John Leo).

While in Rome in 1526 John Leo completed in Italian his *History and Description of Africa*, probably based on an earlier Arabic version. It recounts his observations during his travels in Africa north of the equator and became a principal source of European knowledge of the region. Because of this work he became known as Leo Africanus, Latin for Leo the African. Little is known about the rest of his life except that sometime after 1530 he returned to Africa and died a Muslim in Tunis around 1554.

In the following excerpts, Leo describes several states he visited in the western part of the Sudan, the extensive grass-covered plain that stretches across Africa south of the Sahara. The western Sudan, known as the Sahel, for centuries had been the center of important historical developments, including the rise and fall of several large, impressive states. When Leo visited the region in the early 1500s, the Songhai Empire had replaced the Kingdom of Mali as the dominant state in the region. Its two most important cities were Gao, the capital, and Timbuktu, which was ruled by a governor in the name of the emperor. To the east of Songhai was the Kingdom of Bornu, situated on the shores of Lake Chad.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What do Leo's observations reveal about the economic activities of this region of Africa?
2. How did one become a slave in these Sudanic societies? How were slaves utilized?

3. What generalizations can be made about the intellectual, religious, and cultural life in these Sudanic kingdoms?
4. What similarities and differences were there among the various rulers described by Leo? What was the basis of their authority and power?
5. Consider the powers exercised by the king of Timbuktu, who was a vassal of the Songhai emperor in Gao. What does the king's wealth and authority reveal about the government of the Songhai Empire?

THE KINGDOM OF MALI

In this kingdom there is a large and ample village containing more than six thousand families, and named Mali, which is also the name of the whole kingdom. Here the king has his residence. The region itself yields great abundance of wheat, meat and cotton. Here are many craftsmen and merchants in all places; and yet the king honorably entertains all strangers. The inhabitants are rich and have plenty of merchandise. Here is a great number of temples, clergymen, and teachers, who read their lectures in the mosques because they have no colleges at all. The people of the region excel all other Negroes in wit, civility, and industry, and were the first that embraced the law of Muhammad.¹ . . .

THE CITY OF TIMBUKTU

All its houses are . . . cottages, built of mud and covered with thatch. However, there is a most stately mosque to be seen, whose walls are made of stone and lime, and a princely palace also constructed by the highly skilled craftsmen of Granada.² Here there are many shops of artisans and merchants, especially of those who weave linen and cotton, and here Barbary³ merchants bring European cloth. The inhabitants, and especially resident aliens, are exceedingly rich,

since the present king⁴ married both of his daughters to rich merchants. This region yields great quantities of grain, cattle, milk, and butter, but salt is very scarce here, for it is brought here by land from Tegaza, which is five hundred miles away. When I was there, I saw one camel-load of salt sold for eighty ducats.⁵

The rich king of Timbuktu has many plates and scepters of gold, some of which weigh 1,300 pounds, and he keeps a magnificent and well-furnished court. When he travels anywhere, he rides upon a camel, which is led by some of his noblemen. He does so likewise when going to war, and all his soldiers ride upon horses. Whoever wishes to speak to this king must first of all fall down before his feet and then taking up earth must sprinkle it on his own head and shoulders. . . . [The king] always has under arms 3,000 horsemen and a great number of foot soldiers who shoot poisoned arrows. They often skirmish with those who refuse to pay tribute and whomever they capture they sell to the merchants of Timbuktu. Here very few horses are bred. . . . Their best horses are brought out of North Africa. . . .

Here are great numbers of religious teachers, judges, scholars and other learned persons, who are bountifully maintained at the king's expense. Here too are brought various manuscripts or written books from Barbary, which are sold for more money than any other merchandise.

¹In fact, the establishment of Islam in western Africa preceded the rise of Mali in the mid thirteenth century. The rulers of Ghana (ca. 990–ca. 1180), the first major empire in the region, probably accepted Islam shortly after 1100.

²A region of southern Spain which had had a large Muslim population.

³The northern region of Africa from the Atlantic to the Egyptian border.

⁴The king of Timbuktu, a vassal of the Songhai emperor, as governor exercised a good deal of local power.

⁵An Italian coin.

The coin of Timbuktu is gold, without any stamp or inscription, but in matters of small value they use certain shells from the Kingdom of Persia. Four hundred of these are worth a ducat, and six pieces of Timbuktu's golden coin weigh two-thirds of an ounce.

The inhabitants are gentle and cheerful and spend a great part of the night in singing and dancing throughout the city streets. They keep large numbers of male and female slaves, and their town is greatly vulnerable to fire. . . .

THE TOWN AND KINGDOM OF GAO

Here are very rich merchants and to here journey continually large numbers of Negroes who purchase here cloth from Barbary and Europe. The town abounds in grain and meat but lacks wine, trees and fruits. However, there are plenty of melons, lemons and rice. Here there are many wells, which also contain very sweet and wholesome water. Here also is a certain place where slaves are sold, especially upon those days when merchants assemble. A young slave of fifteen years of age is sold for six ducats, and children are also sold.

The king of this region has a certain private palace in which he keeps a large number of concubines and slaves, who are watched by eunuchs. To guard his person he maintains a sufficient troop of horsemen and foot soldiers. Between the first gate of the palace and the inner part, there is a walled enclosure wherein the king personally decides all of his subjects' controversies. Although the king is most diligent in this regard and conducts all business in these matters, he has in his company counsellors and such other officers as his secretaries, treasurers, stewards and auditors.

It is a wonder to see the quality of merchandise that is daily brought here and how costly and sumptuous everything is. Horses purchased in Europe for ten ducats are sold here for forty

and sometimes fifty ducats apiece. There is not European cloth so coarse as to sell for less than four ducats an ell.⁶ If it is anywhere near fine quality, they will give fifteen ducats for an ell, and an ell of the scarlet of Venice or of Turkish cloth is here worth thirty ducats. A sword is here valued at three or four crowns,⁷ and likewise are spears, bridles and similar commodities, and spices are all sold at a high rate. However, of all other items, salt is the most expensive.

The rest of this kingdom contains nothing but villages and hamlets inhabited by herdsmen and shepherds, who in winter cover their bodies with the skins of animals, but in summer they go naked, save for their private parts. . . . They are an ignorant and rude people, and you will scarcely find one learned person in the square of a hundred miles. They are continually burdened by heavy taxes; to the point that they scarcely have anything left on which to live.

THE KINGDOM OF BORNU

They have a most powerful prince. . . . He has in readiness as many as three thousand horsemen and a huge number of foot soldiers; for all his subjects are so . . . obedient to him, that whenever he commands them, they will arm themselves and will follow him wherever he leads them. They pay him no tribute except tithes on their grain; neither does the king have any revenues to support his state except the spoils he gets from his enemies by frequent invasions and assaults. He is in a state of perpetual hostility with a certain people who live beyond the desert of Seu, who in times past marching with a huge army of footsoldiers over the said desert, devastated a great part of the Kingdom of Bornu. Whereupon the king sent for the merchants of Barbary and ordered them to bring him a great store of horses: for in this country they exchange horses for slaves, and sometimes give fifteen or twenty slaves for a horse. And by this means there were a great many horses bought although the

⁶A measurement of length, approximately forty-five inches.

⁷A gold coin, worth substantially more than a ducat.

merchants were forced to stay for their slaves until the king returned home as a conqueror with a great number of captives, and satisfied his creditors for his horses. Frequently it happens that the merchants must stay three months before the king returned from the wars. . . . Sometimes he does not bring home enough slaves to satisfy the

merchants and sometimes they are forced to wait a whole year. . . . And yet the king seems marvelously rich, because his spurs, bridles, platters, dishes, pots and other vessels are made of gold. The king is extremely covetous and would rather pay his debts in slaves rather than gold.

Africa's Cosmopolitan East Coast



12 ▼ *Duarte Barbosa,* *AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRIES* *BORDERING THE INDIAN OCEAN*

Duarte Barbosa (ca. 1480–1521) was a native of Lisbon who as a government official participated in a number of Portuguese commercial enterprises on the east African coast and in India. When passed over for a promotion, he resigned to take a position with the Spanish government. He died in 1521 in the Philippines. Before his resignation, he collected information about the societies he visited, compiling it as a book.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What can you gather from Barbosa's account about the characteristics of the east African coast in the areas of (a) trade, (b) types of government, (c) religion, and (d) language?
2. What impresses Barbosa about the cities he is describing?
3. On the basis of his account, what can you infer about the impact of the Portuguese in this region?
4. What is there in Barbosa's account that may explain why most east coast Africans had little success defending themselves against the Portuguese?

SOFALA

Going forward in the direction of India there is a river of no great size upon which up the stream is a town of the Moors¹ which they call Sofala, close to which the King our Lord² possesses a fort. These Moors have dwelt there for a long time by reason of the great traffic which they

carried on with the heathen of the mainland. The Moors of this place speak Arabic and have a king over them who is subject to the King our Lord.

And the manner of their traffic was this: they came in small vessels named *zambucos*³ from the kingdoms of Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi, bringing many cotton cloths, some spotted and others white and blue, also some of silk, and many

¹African Muslims.

²The king of Portugal, Manuel I.

³Derived from the Arabic word *zambuc*, meaning small sailing vessel with a single mast.

small beads, grey, red, and yellow, which things come to the said kingdoms from the great kingdom of Cambay⁴ in other greater ships. And these wares the said Moors who came from Malindi and Mombasa paid for in gold at such a price that those merchants departed well pleased. . . .

The Moors of Sofala kept these wares and sold them afterward to the heathen of the Kingdom of Monomotapa, who came there laden with gold which they gave in exchange for the said cloths without weighing it. These Moors collect also a great store of ivory which they find all around Sofala and this also they sell in the Kingdom of Cambay at five or six cruzados⁵ the quintal.⁶ They also sell some amber which is brought to them, . . . and is exceeding good. These Moors are black, and some of them tawny; some of them speak Arabic, but the greater part use the language of the country. They clothe themselves from the waist down with cotton and silk cloths, and other cloths they wear over their shoulders like capes, and turbans on their heads. . . . In this same Sofala now of late they make great store of cotton and weave it, and from it they make much white cloth, and as they know not how to dye it, or have not the needed dyes, they take the Cambay cloths, blue or otherwise colored, and unravel them and make them up again, so that it becomes a new thing. With this thread and their own white they make much colored cloth, and from it they gain much gold. . . .

KILWA

Going along the coast, . . . there is an island hard by the mainland which is called Kilwa, in which is a Moorish town with many fair houses of stone and mortar, with many windows after our fashion, very well arranged in streets, with many flat roofs. The doors are of wood, well carved, with excellent joinery. Around it are streams and orchards and fruit-gardens with many channels of sweet water. It has a Moorish king over it. From

this place they trade with Sofala, from which they bring back gold, and from here they spread all over Arabia. . . . Before the King our Lord sent out his expedition to discover India the Moors of Sofala, Cuama, Angoya and Mozambique were all subject to the King of Kilwa, who was the mightiest king among them. And in this town was an abundance of gold, as no ships passed toward Sofala without first coming to this island. Of the Moors there are some fair and some black, they are finely clad in many rich garments of gold and silk and cotton, and the women as well; also with much gold and silver in chains and bracelets, which they wear on their legs and arms, and many jeweled earrings in their ears. . . .

This town was taken by force from its king by the Portuguese, as, moved by arrogance, he refused to obey the King our Lord. There they took many prisoners and the king fled from the island, and His Highness ordered that a fort should be built there, and kept it under his rule and governance. . . .

MOMBASA

Further on, an advance along the coast toward India, there is an island hard by the mainland, on which is a town called Mombasa. It is a very fair place, with lofty stone and mortar houses, well aligned in streets after the fashion of Kilwa. The wood is well-fitted with excellent joiner's work. It has its own king, himself a Moor. The men are in color either tawny, black or white and also their women go very bravely attired with many fine garments of silk and gold in abundance. This is a place of great trade, and has a good harbor, in which are always moored craft of many kinds and also great ships, both of those which come from Sofala and those which go there, and others which come from the great kingdom of Cambay and from Malindi; others which sail to the islands of Zanzibar, and yet others of which I shall speak later.

⁴A region of northwest coastal India, named after its major city, an important international port.

⁵A Portuguese unit of money.

⁶A unit of weight, roughly 100 to 130 pounds.

This Mombasa is a land very full of food. Here are found many very fine sheep with round tails, cows and other cattle in great plenty, and many fowls, all of which are exceeding fat. There is much millet and rice, sweet and bitter oranges, lemons, pomegranates, Indian figs, vegetables of diverse kinds, and much sweet water. The men are oft-times at war . . . but at peace with those of the mainland, and they carry on trade with them, obtaining great amounts of honey, wax, and ivory.

The king of this city refused to obey the commands of the King our Lord, and through this arrogance he lost it, and our Portuguese took it from him by force. He fled away, and they slew many of his people and also took captive many, both men and women, in such sort that it was left ruined and plundered and burnt. Of gold and silver great booty was taken here, bangles, bracelets, earrings and gold beads, also great store of copper with other rich wares in great quantity, and the town was left in ruins.

MALINDI

Leaving Mombasa, and journeying along the coast toward India, there is a fair town on the mainland lying along a strand, which is named Malindi. It belongs to the Moors and has a Moorish king over it; the place has many fair stone and mortar houses of many stories, with great plenty of windows and flat roofs, after our fashion. The place is well laid out in streets. The folk are both black and white; they go naked, covering only their private parts with cotton and silk cloths. Others of them wear cloths folded like cloaks and waist-bands, and turbans of many rich stuffs on their heads.

They are great barterers, and deal in cloth, gold, ivory, and diverse other wares with the Moors and heathen of the great kingdom of Cambay; and to their harbor come every year many ships with cargoes of merchandise, from which they get great store of gold, ivory, and wax. In this traffic the Cambay merchants make great profits, and thus, on one side and the other,

they earn much money. There is plenty of food in this city (rice, millet, and some wheat which they bring from Cambay), and diverse sorts of fruit, inasmuch as there is here abundance of fruit-gardens and orchards. Here too are plenty of round-tailed sheep, cows, and other cattle and great store of oranges, also of hens.

The king and people of this place ever were and are friends of the King of Portugal, and the Portuguese always find in them great comfort and friendship and perfect peace, and there the ships, when they chance to pass that way, obtain supplies in plenty. . . .

MAFIA, ZANZIBAR, AND PEMBA

Between this island of San Lorenzo and the continent, not very far from it, are three islands, which are called one Mafia, another Zanzibar, and the other Pemba; these are inhabited by Moors; they are very fertile islands, with plenty of provisions, rice, millet, and flesh, and abundant oranges, lemons, and citrons. All the mountains are full of them; they produce many sugar canes, but do not know how to make sugar. These islands have their kings. The inhabitants trade with the mainland with their provisions and fruits; they have small vessels, very loosely and badly made, without decks, and with a single mast; all their planks are sewn together with cords of reed or matting, and the sails are of palm mats. They are very feeble people, with very few and despicable weapons. In these islands they live in great luxury, and abundance; they dress in very good cloths of silk and cotton, which they buy in Mombasa of the merchants from Cambay, who reside there. Their wives adorn themselves with many jewels of gold from Sofala, and silver, in chains, earrings, bracelets, and ankle rings, and are dressed in silk stuffs: and they have many mosques. . . .

OF THE CITY OF BRAVA

It has no king, but is ruled by elders, and ancients of the land, who are the persons held in

the highest esteem, and who have the chief dealings in merchandise of diverse kinds. And this place was destroyed by the Portuguese, who slew many of its people and carried many into captivity, and took great spoil of gold and silver and goods. Thenceforth many of them fled away toward the inland country, forsaking the town; yet after it had been destroyed the Portuguese again settled and peopled it, so that now it is as prosperous as it was before.

The Portuguese in Africa

By the time the news of Columbus's voyage to "the Indies" began to ripple through Europe in the spring of 1493, the Portuguese had more than seventy years' experience exploring and trading in Africa. By the early 1480s, having established a line of fortified coastal trading posts as far as Benin on the Guinea Coast, they were generating profits from trade in gold, ivory, and slaves. Then in 1482, under King João II, the Portuguese embarked on a more ambitious and daring campaign to reach India by sailing around Africa. In 1488 Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa all the way to Calicut on India's west coast. During the early sixteenth century the Portuguese annexed east African coastal cities, defeated Arab and Persian navies, and established control of a direct sea route to India and beyond. Africa became a link in a Portuguese commercial empire stretching from Europe to China and, for a time, Japan.

Early Portuguese merchants and missionaries presented themselves to the Africans as friendly traders and potential allies. Government officials proclaimed idealistic aims of educating the Africans and converting them to Christianity. On the whole, however, Portuguese involvement in Africa was self-serving and disastrous for the Africans. The Portuguese became engaged in the slave trade in the 1450s, and by 1500 they were shipping better than a thousand slaves a year to Europe and to the islands off the African coast, where they had established sugar plantations. In the sixteenth century indiscriminate Portuguese slaving contributed to the disintegration of the Kingdom of Kongo and led to long decades of war against the Kingdom of Ndongo, to the south. The heavy-handed Portuguese conquest of Africa's prosperous east coast disrupted the region's commerce and resulted in the looting and destruction of numerous cities. But the Africans were capable of mounting spirited and effective resistance against the Portuguese, who, despite their artillery and arquebuses, did not always have their way.

An African Voice of Protest



13 ▼ *Nzinga Mbemba (Afonso I),* *LETTERS TO THE KING OF PORTUGAL*

The largest state in central West Africa around 1500 was the Kingdom of Kongo, stretching along the estuary of the Congo River in territory that today lies within Angola and Zaire. In 1483 the Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão made contact with Kongo and several years later visited its inland capital. When he sailed home he was accompanied by Kongo emissaries, whom King Nzinga a Kuwu dispatched to Lisbon to learn European ways. They returned in 1491, along with Portuguese priests, artisans, and soldiers who brought numerous European goods, including a printing press. In the same year, the king and his son, Nzinga Mbemba, were baptized as Catholics.

Around 1506 Nzinga Mbemba, who took the name Afonso after his baptism, succeeded his father and ruled until about 1543. Afonso promoted the introduction of European culture in his kingdom by proclaiming Christianity the state religion (a step that affected few of his subjects), imitating the etiquette of Portuguese royalty, and using the Portuguese language in state business. His son Henrique was educated in Portugal and returned to serve as the region's Roman Catholic bishop. European firearms, horses, and cattle were introduced, and Afonso dreamed of achieving a powerful and prosperous state through cooperation with the Europeans. By the time of his death, however, his kingdom verged on disintegration, in no small measure because of the Portuguese. As many later African rulers were to discover, the introduction of European products and customs caused dissension and social instability. Worse, Portuguese involvement in the slave trade undermined Afonso's authority and made his subjects restive. In 1526 the king wrote the following three letters to King João III of Portugal, urging him to control his rapacious subjects. The documents are part of a collection of twenty-four letters that Afonso and his Portuguese-educated, native secretaries dispatched to the kings of Portugal on a variety of issues.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Afonso, what have been the detrimental effects of the Portuguese presence in his kingdom?
2. What do the letters reveal about the workings of the slave trade in the kingdom? Who participated in it?
3. What do the letters reveal about Afonso's attitude toward slavery? Explain whether he opposes the practice as such or only certain aspects of it.
4. What steps had the king taken to deal with the problems caused by the Portuguese? What do the letters suggest about the effectiveness of these steps?

5. How would you characterize Afonso's attitude toward the power and authority of the king of Portugal? Does he consider himself inferior to the Portuguese king or his equal?
6. How would you characterize King Afonso's conception of the ideal relationship between the Portuguese and his kingdom?

Sir, Your Highness should know how our Kingdom is being lost in so many ways that it is convenient to provide for the necessary remedy, since this is caused by the excessive freedom given by your agents and officials to the men and merchants who are allowed to come to this Kingdom to set up shops with goods and many things which have been prohibited by us, and which they spread throughout our Kingdoms and Domains in such an abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in obedience, do not comply because they have the things in greater abundance than we ourselves; and it was with these things that we had them content and subjected under our vassalage and jurisdiction, so it is doing a great harm not only to the service of God, but the security and peace of our Kingdoms and State as well.

And we cannot reckon how great the damage is, since the mentioned merchants are taking every day our natives, sons of the land and the sons of our noblemen and vassals and our relatives, because the thieves and men of bad conscience grab them wishing to have the things and wares of this Kingdom which they are ambitious of; they grab them and get them to be sold; and so great, Sir, is the corruption and licentiousness that our country is being completely depopulated, and Your Highness should not agree with this nor accept it as in your service. And to avoid it we need from those (your) Kingdoms no more than some priests and a few people to teach in schools, and no other goods except wine and flour for the holy sacrament. That is why we beg of Your Highness to help and assist us in this matter, commanding your factors that they should not send here either merchants or

wares, because it is *our will that in these Kingdoms there should not be any trade of slaves nor outlet for them.*¹ Concerning what is referred [to] above, again we beg of Your Highness to agree with it, since otherwise we cannot remedy such an obvious damage. Pray Our Lord in His mercy to have Your Highness under His guard and let you do forever the things of His service. I kiss your hands many times.

At our town of Kongo, written on the sixth day of July, João Teixeira² did it in 1526.

The King. Dom³ Afonso.

{On the back of this letter the following can be read:

To the most powerful and excellent prince Dom João, King our Brother.}

▼ ▼ ▼

Moreover, Sir, in our Kingdoms there is another great inconvenience which is of little service to God, and this is that many of our people, keenly desirous as they are of the wares and things of your Kingdoms, which are brought here by your people, and in order to satisfy their voracious appetite, seize many of our people, freed and exempt men, and very often it happens that they kidnap even noblemen and the sons of noblemen, and our relatives, and take them to be sold to the white men who are in our Kingdoms; and for this purpose they have concealed them; and others are brought during the night so that they might not be recognized.

And as soon as they are taken by the white men they are immediately ironed and branded with fire, and when they are carried to be embarked, if they are caught by our guards' men the whites allege that they have bought them

¹Emphasis appears in original letter.

²One of Afonso's secretaries.

³Portuguese for "lord."

but they cannot say from whom, so that it is our duty to do justice and to restore to the freemen their freedom, but it cannot be done if your subjects feel offended, as they claim to be.

And to avoid such a great evil we passed a law so that any white man living in our Kingdoms and wanting to purchase goods in any way should first inform three of our noblemen and officials of our court whom we rely upon in this matter, and these are Dom Pedro Manipanaza and Dom Manuel Manissaba, our chief usher, and Gonçalo Pires our chief freighter, who should investigate if the mentioned goods are captives or free men, and if cleared by them there will be no further doubt nor embargo for them to be taken and embarked. But if the white men do not comply with it they will lose the aforementioned goods. And if we do them this favor and concession it is for the part Your Highness has in it, since we know that it is in your service too that these goods are taken from our Kingdom, otherwise we should not consent to this. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

Sir, Your Highness has been kind enough to write to us saying that we should ask in our letters for anything we need, and that we shall be provided with everything, and as the peace and the health of our Kingdom depend on us, and as there are among us old folks and people who have lived for many days, it happens that we have continuously many and different diseases which put us very often in such a weakness that we reach almost the last extreme; and the same happens to

our children, relatives and natives owing to the lack in this country of physicians and surgeons who might know how to cure properly such diseases. And as we have got neither dispensaries nor drugs which might help us in this forlornness, many of those who had been already confirmed and instructed in the holy faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ perish and die; and the rest of the people in their majority cure themselves with herbs and breads and other ancient methods, so that they put all their faith in the mentioned herbs and ceremonies if they live, and believe that they are saved if they die; and this is not much in the service of God.

And to avoid such a great error and inconvenience, since it is from God in the first place and then from your Kingdoms and from Your Highness that all the good and drugs and medicines have come to save us, we beg of you to be agreeable and kind enough to send us two physicians and two apothecaries and one surgeon, so that they may come with their drugstores and all the necessary things to stay in our kingdoms, because we are in extreme need of them all and each of them. We shall do them all good and shall benefit them by all means, since they are sent by Your Highness, whom we thank for your work in their coming. We beg of Your Highness as a great favor to do this for us, because besides being good in itself it is in the service of God as we have said above.

{Extracts from letter of King Afonso to the King of Portugal dated Oct. 18, 1526. By hand of Dom João Teixeira.}

The Zimba and the Portuguese

▼ ▼ ▼

14 ▼ *João dos Santos, EASTERN ETHIOPIA*

An example of African response to the Portuguese disruption of traditional trade patterns is provided by the military campaigns launched by the people known as the Zimba in the late sixteenth century. The *Zimba*, a term used by the Portuguese to describe any and all marauders from north of the Zambezi River, were in fact warriors of the Mang'aja tribe, whose attacks on the Portuguese and other African peoples to their east were ordered by their Lundu, or chief, in the late

1580s in response to disruption of their traditional trade. During the sixteenth century the market for Mang'aja ivory was ruined when the gold-obsessed Portuguese took over the coastal cities with which the Mang'aja had traded. The Zimba's military campaigns were intended to force the reopening of these markets. The Portuguese efforts to suppress the Zimba's attacks failed spectacularly. The Mang'aja continued their attacks until the early 1600s, but they never succeeded in re-establishing the traditional market for their ivory.

The following excerpt is from *Eastern Ethiopia* by João dos Santos, about whom little is known except that he was a Catholic clergyman who traveled along the east African coast and resided for a time in Sofala during the late sixteenth century. He uses the term *eastern Ethiopia* to include all of Africa's east coast from the Cape of Good Hope to the Red Sea.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to dos Santos's account, why do the Portuguese decide to resist the Zimba?
2. What seems to have been the attitude of the Zimba toward the Portuguese?
3. How would you characterize the attitude of the African allies of the Portuguese toward the Zimba? How dedicated were the allies to the Portuguese themselves?
4. How great an advantage did Portuguese firearms give them over their enemy?
5. What tactics of the Zimba were most effective in the conflict with the Portuguese and their allies? What purposes did cannibalism play in their overall strategy?
6. What hints does dos Santos's account provide about the motives of the Zimba's military campaign?

Opposite the fort of Sena, on the other side of the river, live some Kaffirs,¹ lords of those lands, good neighbors and friends of the Portuguese, and always most loyal to them. It so happened at the time I was there that the Zimba Kaffirs, . . . who eat human flesh, invaded this territory and made war upon one of these friendly Kaffirs, and by force of arms took from him the kraal² in which he resided and a great part of his land, besides which they killed and ate a number of his people. The Kaffir, seeing himself thus routed

and his power destroyed, proceeded to Sena³ to lay his trouble before the captain, who was then André de Santiago, and to beg for assistance in driving out of his house the enemy who had taken possession of it. The captain, upon hearing his pitiful request, determined to assist him, both because he was very friendly to us and because he did not wish to have so near to Sena a neighbor as wicked as the Zimba.

Therefore, having made all necessary preparations for this war, he set out, taking with him a

¹Based on the Arab word *kafir*, meaning "black," Kaffir was used to refer to the Bantu-speaking peoples of south-eastern Africa and more generally to non-Muslim black Africans. Today in South Africa it is a derogatory term used by some whites for all blacks.

²Based on the Portuguese word *curral*, an enclosed pen for cattle, kraal refers to the enclosed area surrounding a royal residence.

³Sena and Tete were towns on the Zambesi River where the Portuguese had established trading posts.

great number of the Portuguese of Sena with their guns and two pieces of heavy cannon from the fort. On arriving at the place where the Zimba were, they found them within a strong double palisade of wood, with its ramparts and loopholes for arrows, surrounded by a very deep and wide trench, within which the enemy were most defiant. André de Santiago, seeing that the enterprise was much more formidable than he had anticipated and that he had brought with him but few men to attack so strong an enemy and his fortress, fixed his camp on the bank of a rivulet which ran by the place, and sent a message to the captain of Tete, Pedro Fernandes de Chaves, to come to his assistance with the Portuguese of Tete and as many Kaffir vassals of his fort as he could bring.

Pedro Fernandes de Chaves immediately prepared to go to the assistance of André de Santiago, and assembled more than a hundred men with their guns, Portuguese and half-castes,⁴ and the eleven vassal chiefs. They all crossed to the other side of the river and proceeded by land until they were near the place where the Zimba had fortified themselves. These had information of their approach, and greatly feared their arrival. For this reason they sent out spies secretly upon the road, that when they approached they might see them, and report concerning the men who were coming. And learning from these spies that the Portuguese were in front of the Kaffirs in palanquins⁵ and hammocks and not disposed in order of battle, they sallied out of their fortress by night secretly, without being heard by André de Santiago, and proceeded to conceal themselves in a dense thicket at about half a league's distance, through which the men of Tete would have to pass. When they were thus stationed the Portuguese came up nearly half a league in advance of the Kaffirs of their company, quite unsuspecting of what might befall them in the thicket. Just as they were entering it the Zimba fell upon

them suddenly with such violence that in a short time they were all killed, not one surviving, and when they were dead the Zimba cut off their legs and arms, which they carried away on their backs with all the baggage and arms they had brought with them, after which they returned secretly to their fortress. When the chiefs reached the thicket and found all the Portuguese and their captain dead, they immediately turned back from the place and retreated to Tete, where they related the lamentable event that had occurred.

At the time that preparations for this war were being made there was a friar of St. Dominic preaching at Tete, named Nicolau do Rosario, . . . a man who had reached perfection in many virtues. . . . In the ambush he was severely wounded, and seizing him yet alive the Zimba carried him away with them to put him to death more cruelly afterwards, which they did upon arriving at their fortress, where they bound him hand and foot to a tree and killed him with their arrows in the most cruel manner. This they did to him rather than to others because he was a priest and head of the Christians, as they called him, laying all the blame for the war upon him and saying that Christians did nothing without the leave and counsel of their cacis.⁶ . . .

After the Zimba had put Father Nicolau to death they rested during the remainder of that sad day, and on the night that followed they celebrated their victory and success, playing upon many cornets and drums, and the next day at dawn they all sallied out of their fortress, the chief clothed in the chasuble⁷ that the father had brought with him to say mass, carrying the golden chalice in his left hand and an assagai⁸ in his right, all the other Zimba carrying on their backs the limbs of the Portuguese, with the head of the captain of Tete on the point of a long lance, and beating a drum they had taken from him. In this manner, with loud shouts and cries they came within sight of André de Santiago and all the

⁴People of mixed Portuguese/African ancestry.

⁵Covered litters or couches that were mounted on long horizontal poles so they could be carried about.

⁶Religious leaders.

⁷A chasuble is one of the vestments worn by a Catholic priest while celebrating mass.

⁸A spear.

Portuguese who were with him, and showed them all these things. After this they retired within their fortress, saying that what they had done to the men of Tete who had come to help their enemies, they would do to them, and that it was the flesh of those men that they were about to eat.

André de Santiago . . . was greatly shocked, as also were all the other Portuguese, at this most horrible and pitiful spectacle, for which reason they decided to retreat as soon as night came on. In carrying this decision into execution they were in so great a hurry to reach the other side of the river that they were heard by the Zimba, who sallied out of their fortress and falling upon them with great violence killed many of them on the bank of the river. Among the slain was André de Santiago, who died as the valiant man he was. . . .

Thus these robbers and fierce Zimba killed one hundred and thirty Portuguese and half-castes of Tete and Sena and the two captains of these forts. This they accomplished with very little loss on their side, with their usual cunning, as they always took the Portuguese unawares, when they were unable to fight. This took place in the year 1592.

Great sorrow was felt at the death of Father Nicolau, whom all looked upon as a saint, and for all the Portuguese who lost their lives in this most disastrous war, both because some of them were married and left wives and children at these rivers, and because the Zimba were victorious, more insolent than before, and were within fortifications close to Sena, where with greater audacity they might in the future do much damage to the Portuguese who passed up and down these rivers with their merchandise. For these reasons Dom Pedro de Sousa, captain of Mozambique, determined to chastise these Zimba, conquer them, and drive them from the vicinity of Sena. . . .

After obtaining information of the condition of the Zimba, he commanded all the necessary preparations to be made for this war, and assembled nearly two hundred Portuguese and fif-

teen hundred Kaffirs, with whom he crossed to the other side of the Zambesi and proceeded by land to the fortress of the Zimba, where he formed a camp at the same place that André de Santiago had formed his. Then he commanded that the various pieces of artillery which he had taken with him for the purpose should be fired against the wall of the fortress, but this had no effect upon it, as it was made of large wood, strengthened within by a strong and wide rampart which the Zimba had constructed with the earth from the trench.

Dom Pedro, seeing that his artillery had no effect upon the enemy's wall, determined to enter the fortress and take it by assault, and for this purpose he commanded part of the trench to be filled up, which was done with great difficulty and danger to our men, as the Zimba from the top of the wall wounded and killed some of them with arrows. When this part of the trench was filled up, a number of men crossed over with axes in their hands to the foot of the palisade, which they began to cut down, but the Zimba from the top of the wall poured so great a quantity of boiling fat and water upon them that nearly all were scalded and badly wounded, especially the naked Kaffirs, so that no one dared go near the palisade, because they were afraid of the boiling fat and through fear of certain iron hooks similar to long harpoons, which the Zimba thrust through the loopholes in the wall and with which they wounded and caught hold of all who came near and pulled from within with such force that they drew them to the apertures, where they wounded them mortally. For this reason the captain commanded all the men to be recalled to the camp to rest, and the remainder of that day was spent in tending the wounded and the scalded.

The following day the captain commanded a quantity of wood and branches of trees to be collected, with which huge wicker-work frames were made, as high as and higher than the enemy's palisade, and he commanded them to be placed in front of the wall and filled with earth

that the soldiers might fight on them with their guns, and the Zimba would not dare to appear on the wall or be able to pour boiling fat upon the men cutting down the palisade. When this stratagem of war was almost in readiness, another peaceful or cowardly device was planned in the following manner. The war had lasted two months, for which reason the residents of these rivers, who were there rather by force than of their own free will, being away from their homes and trade, which is their profession, and not war, pretended to have received letters from their wives in Sena relating the danger they were in from a rebel Kaffir who they said was coming with a number of men to rob Sena, knowing that the Portuguese were absent, for which reason they ought immediately to return home. This false information was spread through the camp, and the residents of Sena went to the captain and begged him to abandon the siege of the Zimba

and attend to what was of greater importance, as otherwise they would be compelled to return to their homes and leave him.

Dom Pedro, seeing their determination and believing the information said to be given in the letters to be true, abandoned the siege and commanded the men to pass by night to the other side of the river and return to Sena, but this retreat could not be effected with such secrecy as to be unknown to the Zimba, who sallied out of their fortress with great cries, fell upon the camp, killed some men who were still there, and seized the greater part of the baggage and artillery, that had not been taken away.

With this defeat and disappointment the captain returned to Sena, and thence to Mozambique, without accomplishing what he desired; and the Zimba's position was improved and he became more insolent than before. . . .

Images of Europeans in the Art of Benin



15 ▼ *A BENIN-PORTUGUESE SALTCELLAR and A BENIN WALL PLAQUE*

Over many centuries sub-Saharan Africans have produced some of the world's most impressive artworks, especially sculpture. Since at least 500 B.C.E., sculptors used clay, wood, ivory, and bronze to create a wide variety of works — masks, animal figures, ceremonial weapons, images of rulers, and religious objects — that were of central importance to African society, politics, and religion. In some regions bronze casting and ivory carving were royal monopolies carried on by highly trained professionals.

Such was the case in Benin, a kingdom located on the west coast of tropical Africa in an area that today is part of Nigeria. The kingdom took shape in the 1200s and 1300s when a number of agricultural villages accepted the authority of an *oba*, or divine king, who ruled with a hierarchy of chiefs from the capital, Benin City. By the time the Portuguese arrived in 1485, Benin was a formidable military and commercial power and a center of state-sponsored artistic activity. Ivory carvers and bronze casters were organized into hereditary guilds and resided in their own neighborhoods in Benin City. They produced bronze heads, animal and human figures, pendants, plaques, musical instruments, drinking

vessels, and armlets that were sold for a profit or utilized for ceremonial purposes.

The arrival of the Portuguese affected Benin's artistic development in two important ways. First, Portuguese merchants, prevented by the oba from establishing Benin as a major source of slaves, turned to other commodities, including artworks, as objects of trade. Benin ivory carvers received numerous commissions from Portuguese merchants to produce condiment sets, utensils, and hunting horns for sale in Europe. Second, the Portuguese stimulated the production of artworks for use in Benin itself by purchasing African goods with copper, the major component of the alloys used by Benin artists to create their plaques and sculptures.

The two works included in this section provide opportunities to appreciate the skills of Benin artists and to gain insights into Benin attitudes toward Europeans. The first work, an ivory carving, was crafted in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century and is usually identified as a *salarario*, or saltcellar. It depicts two Portuguese officials, flanked by two assistants. Above them is a Portuguese ship, with a man peering out of a crow's nest.

The second work is a sixteenth-century bronze plaque, approximately eighteen inches high, designed to be hung on a wall in the oba's palace in Benin City. One can see the holes on the top and bottom of the plaque where it was attached. The central figure is the oba, shown holding a spear and shield. On each of his sides are represented three subordinate chiefs. The one on the left is holding a bent iron bar, used as currency in trade; the figure next to him is holding a ceremonial sword; the figure on the far right is playing a flute-like musical instrument. The two figures in the background, on each side of the oba's head, represent the Portuguese. In one hand each figure holds a rectangular object, perhaps a glass mirror, and in the other hand what appears to be a goblet. Experts believe these objects represent items the Portuguese offered in trade for Benin goods.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In the saltcellar, notice what hangs around the standing figure's neck, what he holds in his hands, and his facial expression. What is the sculptor trying to communicate about this figure?
2. Why might this image of the Portuguese official have appealed to the European purchasers for which the carving was intended?
3. What distinguishes the oba from the other figures in the plaque? What details illustrate the oba's power and perhaps his divinity?
4. How does the representation of the Portuguese in the plaque differ from that of the saltcellar?
5. What might you infer from these works about Portuguese-Benin relations and attitudes of the Benin people toward the Portuguese?



A Benin-Portuguese Saltcellar



A Benin Wall Plaque

Encounters in the Americas

For many millennia, perhaps beginning as early as 40,000 B.C.E., hunters from Asia crossed the land bridge linking northeast Siberia with the area of modern Alaska. Then after 10,000 B.C.E., as the Ice Age ended and the world's oceans rose, this single link between Eurasia and the Americas was submerged under the Bering Sea, and the peoples of the Americas were cut off from the rest of the world. This isolation ended in the years following Columbus's voyage to the New World in 1492, when Europeans and Africans, along with their animals, plants, and pathogens, began to arrive.

First in the West Indies, then in Mexico and Peru, and ultimately throughout the Americas, Native Americans after 1492 faced the decision to resist or cooperate with the Europeans. Cooperation most commonly took the form of trade in which Amerindians exchanged dyes, foodstuffs, and furs for hardware, firearms, trinkets, and alcoholic beverages. Cooperation also took the form of military alliances. In Mexico, thousands of Amerindians fought on Cortés's side against their hated enemy, the Aztecs, while in North America, the Hurons allied with the French and the Iroquois with the Dutch and later the English in a long series of major and minor wars.

Many Amerindians chose to resist the European invaders. In Mexico and South America, however, military defeat for the Native Americans came early with the conquests of the Aztec Empire by Cortés between 1519 and 1521 and the overthrow of the Inca Empire by Pizarro between 1531 and 1533. In North America, Indian raids inflicted considerable casualties and damage on the early European settlements in New England, the middle colonies, and the Chesapeake region. But the colonists' reprisals were equally bloody and destructive to the Indians, and in larger-scale conflicts such as the Pequot War (1637) in Connecticut and the Algonquin-Dutch wars (1643–1645) in modern New York and New Jersey, the Amerindians were routed and massacred. The long-term outcome of the Amerindians' resistance was never in doubt. The single-mindedness, weaponry, and devastating biological effect of the Europeans made their dominance of the Americans inevitable.

The Battle for Tenochtitlán

16 ▼ *Bernardino de Sahagún,*
GENERAL HISTORY OF THE
THINGS OF NEW SPAIN

Bernardino de Sahagún (ca. 1499–1590), a member of the Franciscan religious order, was one of the earliest Spanish missionaries in Mexico, arriving in 1529. He soon developed a keen interest in the culture of the Amerindians of Mexico,

for whom he had deep affection and respect. Having mastered the Nahuatl language, spoken by the Aztecs and other central Mexican peoples, around 1545 he began a systematic collection of oral and pictorial information about the culture of the native Mexicans. The result was his *General History of the Things of New Spain*, our principal source of information about Mexican culture at the time of the Spanish conquest. Many Spaniards considered Sahagún's work dangerous because they believed his efforts to preserve the memory of native culture threatened their plan to exploit and Christianize the Amerindians. As a result, in 1578 his writings and notes were confiscated by royal decree and sent back to Spain, where they gathered dust in an archive until rediscovered and published in the nineteenth century.

The following selection comes from the twelfth and last book of the *General History*. Based on interviews Sahagún and his Amerindian assistants had with Aztecs who had lived through the conquest some twenty-five years earlier, Book Twelve, which exists in both Nahuatl and Spanish versions, recounts the conquest of Mexico from the time Cortés arrived on the Mexican coast in April 1519 until the days following the Aztecs' capitulation in August 1521. Although the exact role of Sahagún and his assistants in composing and organizing Book Twelve has been hotly debated by scholars, most agree that it accurately portrays Aztec views and perceptions of the events that unfolded between 1519 and 1521.

The following excerpt picks up the story in November 1519. By then the Spaniards had gained as allies the Tlaxcalans, the Aztecs' bitter enemies, and were leaving Cholula, an ancient city that the Spaniards and their allies had sacked and looted because of its leaders' lack of cooperation. They were on their way to Tenochtitlán, the splendid Aztec capital on Lake Texcoco, for an anticipated meeting with Emperor Moctezuma.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does the source reveal about the motives of the Spaniards and their Indian allies for their attack on the Aztecs?
2. What was Moctezuma's strategy to deal with the Spaniards? Why did it fail?
3. Aside from their firearms, what other military advantages did the Spaniards have over their opponents?
4. On several occasions the Aztecs routed the Spaniards. What explains these Aztec victories?
5. How did the Aztec view of war differ from that of the Spaniards?
6. What does the source reveal about Aztec religious beliefs and values?
7. What similarities and differences do you see between the Aztec-Spanish conflict and the armed clashes between the Zimba and the Portuguese (see source 14)?

And after the dying in Cholula, the Spaniards set off on their way to Mexico,¹ coming gathered and bunched, raising dust. . . .

Thereupon Moteucçoma² named and sent noblemen and a great many other agents of his . . . to go meet [Cortés] . . . at Quauhtechcac. They gave [the Spaniards] golden banners of precious feathers, and golden necklaces.

And when they had given the things to them, they seemed to smile, to rejoice and to be very happy. Like monkeys they grabbed the gold. It was as though their hearts were put to rest, brightened, freshened. For gold was what they greatly thirsted for; they were gluttonous for it, starved for it, piggishly wanting it. They came lifting up the golden banners, waving them from side to side, showing them to each other. They seemed to babble; what they said to each other was in a babbling tongue. . . .

Another group of messengers — rainmakers, witches, and priests — had also gone out for an encounter, but nowhere were they able to do anything or to get sight of [the Spaniards]; they did not hit their target, they did not find the people they were looking for, they were not sufficient. . . .

▷ Cortés and his entourage continue their march.

Then they set out in this direction, about to enter Mexico here. Then they all dressed and equipped themselves for war. They girded themselves, tying their battle gear tightly on themselves and then on their horses. Then they arranged themselves in rows, files, ranks.

Four horsemen came ahead going first, staying ahead, leading. . . .

Also the dogs, their dogs, came ahead, sniffing at things and constantly panting.

By himself came marching ahead, all alone, the one who bore the standard on his shoulder. He came waving it about, making it spin, tossing it here and there. . . .

Following him came those with iron swords. Their iron swords came bare and gleaming. On their shoulders they bore their shields, of wood or leather.

The second contingent and file were horses carrying people, each with his cotton cuirass,³ his leather shield, his iron lance, and his iron sword hanging down from the horse's neck. They came with bells on, jingling or rattling. The horses, the deer,⁴ neighed, there was much neighing, and they would sweat a great deal; water seemed to fall from them. And their flecks of foam splatted on the ground, like soapsuds splatting. . . .

The third file were those with iron crossbows, the crossbowmen. Their quivers went hanging at their sides, passed under their armpits, well filled, packed with arrows, with iron bolts. . . .

The fourth file were likewise horsemen; their outfits were the same as has been said.

The fifth group were those with harquebuses,⁵ the harquebusiers, shouldering their harquebuses; some held them [level]. And when they went into the great palace, the residence of the ruler, they repeatedly shot off their harquebuses. They exploded, sputtered, discharged, thundered, disgorged. Smoke spread, it grew dark with smoke, everyplace filled with smoke. The fetid smell made people dizzy and faint.

Then all those from the various altepetl⁶ on the other side of the mountains, the Tlaxcalans, the people of Tlilihquitepec, of Huexotzinco,

¹Mexico throughout the text refers to Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire. *Mexica* (pronounced Mez h ee' ka) refers to the people of Tenochtitlán and Tlatelolco, a large suburb of Tenochtitlán.

²One of several spellings of the Aztec emperor's name, including Montezuma and Moctezuma.

³A piece of armor covering the body from neck to waist.

⁴Having never seen horses, some Aztecs considered them to be large deer.

⁵A heavy matchlock gun that was portable but capable of being fired only with a support.

⁶The Nahuatl term for any sovereign state, especially for the local ethnic states of central Mexico.

came following behind. They came outfitted for war with their cotton upper armor, shields, and bows, their quivers full and packed with feathered arrows, some barbed, some blunted, some with obsidian⁷ points. They went crouching, hitting their mouths with their hands yelling, singing, . . . whistling, shaking their heads.

Some bore burdens and provisions on their backs; some used tump⁸ lines for their forehead, some bands around their chests, some carrying frames, some board cages, some deep baskets. Some made bundles, perhaps putting the bundles on their backs. Some dragged the large cannons, which went resting on wooden wheels, making a clamor as they came.

▷ Cortés and his army entered Tenochtitlán in November 1519 and were amicably received by Moctezuma, who was nonetheless taken captive by the Spaniards. Cortés's army was allowed to remain in a palace compound, but tensions grew the following spring. Pedro de Alvarado, in command while Cortés left to deal with a threat to his authority from the governor of Cuba, became concerned for the Spaniards' safety as the Aztecs prepared to celebrate the annual festival in honor of the god Huitzilopochtli.

And when it had dawned and was already the day of his festivity, very early in the morning those who had made vows to him⁹ unveiled his face. Forming a single row before him they offered him incense; each in his place laid down before him offerings of food for fasting and rolled amaranth dough. And it was as though all the youthful warriors had gathered together and had hit on the idea of holding and observing the festivity in order to show the Spaniards something, to make them marvel and instruct them. . . .

When things were already going on, when the festivity was being observed and there was dancing and singing, with voices raised in song, the

singing was like the noise of waves breaking against the rocks.

When it was time, when the moment had come for the Spaniards to do the killing, they came out equipped for battle. They came and closed off each of the places where people went in and out. . . . Then they surrounded those who were dancing, going among the cylindrical drums. They struck a drummer's arms; both of his hands were severed. Then they struck his neck; his head landed far away. Then they stabbed everyone with iron lances and struck them with iron swords. They struck some in the belly, and then their entrails came spilling out. They split open the heads of some, they really cut their skulls to pieces, their skulls were cut up into little bits. And if someone still tried to run it was useless; he just dragged his intestines along. There was a stench as if of sulfur. Those who tried to escape could go nowhere. When anyone tried to go out, at the entryways they struck and stabbed him.

And when it became known what was happening, everyone cried out, "Mexica warriors, come running, get outfitted with devices, shields, and arrows, hurry, come running, the warriors are dying; they have died, perished, been annihilated, O Mexica warriors!" Thereupon there were war cries, shouting, and beating of hands against lips. The warriors quickly came outfitted, bunched together, carrying arrows and shields. Then the fighting began; they shot at them with barbed darts, spears, and tridents, and they hurled darts with broad obsidian points at them.

▷ The fighting that ensued drove the Spaniards and their allies back to the palace enclave. Without a reliable supply of food and water, in July 1520, Cortés, who had returned with his power intact, led his followers on a desperate nocturnal escape from the city, but they were

⁷A volcanic glass, generally black.

⁸A strap or sling passed around the chest or forehead to help support a pack being carried on a person's back.

⁹The reference is to the god Huitzilopochtli. An image of the god, made from amaranth seed flour and the blood of recently sacrificed victims, played a central role in the festival.

discovered and suffered heavy losses as they fled. They retreated to the other side of the lake, and the Aztecs believed the Spanish threat had passed.

Before the Spanish appeared to us, first an epidemic broke out, a sickness of pustules.¹⁰ . . . Large bumps spread on people; some were entirely covered. They spread everywhere, on the face, the head, the chest, etc. The disease brought great desolation; a great many died of it. They could no longer walk about, but lay in their dwellings and sleeping places, no longer able to move or stir. They were unable to change position, to stretch out on their sides or face down, or raise their heads. And when they made a motion, they called out loudly. The pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death; starvation reigned, and no one took care of others any longer.

On some people, the pustules appeared only far apart, and they did not suffer greatly, nor did many of them die of it. But many people's faces were spoiled by it, their faces and noses were made rough. Some lost an eye or were blinded.

This disease of pustules lasted a full sixty days; after sixty days it abated and ended. When people were convalescing and reviving, the pustules disease began to move in the direction of the Chalco.¹¹ And many were disabled or paralyzed by it, but they were not disabled forever. . . . The Mexica warriors were greatly weakened by it.

And when things were in this state, the Spaniards came, moving toward us from Tetzaco. . . .

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- ▷ Having resupplied his Spanish/Tlaxcalan army and having constructed a dozen cannon-carrying brigantines for use on the lake, Cortés resumed his offensive late in 1520. In April 1521 he reached Tenochtitlán and placed the city under a blockade.
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When their twelve boats had come from Tetzaco, at first they were all assembled at Acachinanco, and then the Marqués¹² moved to Acachinanco. He went about searching where the boats could enter, where the canals were straight, whether they were deep or not, so that they would not be grounded somewhere. But the canals were winding and bent back and forth, and they could not get them in. They did get two boats in; they forced them down the road coming straight from Xoloco. . . .

The Tlatelolca fought in Coquipan, in war boats. And in Xoloco the Spaniards came to a place where there was a wall in the middle of the road, blocking it. They fired the big guns at it. At the first shot it did not give way, but the second time it began to crumble. The third time, at last parts of it fell to the ground, and the fourth time finally the wall went to the ground once and for all. . . .

Once they got two of their boats into the canal at Xocotitlan. When they had beached them, then they went looking into the house sites of the people of Xocotitlan. But Tzilacatzin and some other warriors who saw the Spaniards immediately came out to face them; they came running after them, throwing stones at them, and they scattered the Spaniards into the water. . . .

When they got to Tlilhuacan, the warriors crouched far down and hid themselves, hugging the ground, waiting for the war cry, when there would be shouting and cries of encouragement. When the cry went up, "O Mexica, up and at them!" the Tlappanecatl Ecatzin, a warrior of Otomi¹³ rank, faced the Spaniards and threw himself at them, saying, "O Tlatelolca warriors, up and at them, who are these barbarians? Come running!" Then he went and threw a Spaniard down, knocking him to the ground; the one he threw down was the one who came first, who came leading them. And when he had thrown him down, he dragged the Spaniard off.

¹⁰The disease was smallpox.

¹¹A city on the southeast corner of Lake Texcoco.

¹²Cortés.

¹³Elite warriors bound by oath never to retreat.

And at this point they let loose with all the warriors who had been crouching there; they came out and chased the Spaniards in the passageways, and when the Spaniards saw it the Mexica seemed to be intoxicated. The captives were taken. Many Tlaxcalans, and people of Acolhuacan, Chalco, Xochimilco, etc., were captured. A great abundance were captured and killed. . . .

Then they took the captives to Yacacolco, hurrying them along, going along herding their captives together. Some went weeping, some singing, some went shouting while hitting their hands against their mouths. When they got them to Yacacolco, they lined them all up. Each one went to the altar platform where the sacrifice was performed.¹⁴ The Spaniards went first, going in the lead; the people of the different altepetl just followed, coming last. And when the sacrifice was over, they strung the Spaniards' heads on poles on skull racks; they also strung up the horses' heads. They placed them below, and the Spaniards' heads were above them, strung up facing east. . . .

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- ▷ Despite this victory, the Aztecs could not overcome the problems of shortages of food, water, and warriors. In mid July 1521 the Spaniards and their allies resumed their assault, and in early August the Aztecs decided to send into battle a quetzal-owl warrior, whose success or failure, it was believed, would reveal if the gods wished the Aztecs to continue fighting.
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And all the common people suffered greatly. There was famine; many died of hunger. They no longer drank good, pure water, but the water they drank was salty. Many people died of it, and because of it many got dysentery and died. Everything was eaten: lizards, swallows, maize, straw, grass that grows on salt flats. And they chewed at wood, glue flowers, plaster, leather, and deerskin, which they roasted, baked, and

toasted so that they could eat them, and they ground up medicinal herbs and adobe bricks. There had never been the like of such suffering. The siege was frightening, and great numbers died of hunger. . . .

And . . . the ruler Quauhtemoctzin¹⁵ and the warriors Coyohuehuetzin, Temilotzin, Topantemoctzin, the Mixcoatlailotlac Ahuelitoczin, Tlacotzin, and Petlauhtzin took a great warrior named Tlapaltecatl Opochtzin . . . and outfitted him, dressing him in a quetzal-owl costume. . . . When they put it on him he looked very frightening and splendid. . . . They gave him the darts of the devil,¹⁶ darts of wooden rods with flint tips. And the reason they did this was that it was as though the fate of the rulers of the Mexica were being determined.

When our enemies saw him, it was as though a mountain had fallen. Every one of the Spaniards was frightened; he intimidated them, they seemed to respect him a great deal. Then the quetzal-owl climbed up on the roof. But when some of our enemies had taken a good look at him they rose and turned him back, pursuing him. Then the quetzal-owl turned them again and pursued them. Then he snatched up the precious feathers and gold and dropped down off the roof. He did not die, and our enemies did not carry him off. Also three of our enemies were captured. At that the war stopped for good. There was silence, nothing more happened. Then our enemies went away. It was silent and nothing more happened until it got dark.

And the next day nothing more happened at all, no one made a sound. The common people just lay collapsed. The Spaniards did nothing more either, but lay still, looking at the people. Nothing was going on, they just lay still. . . .

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- ▷ Two weeks passed before the Aztecs capitulated on August 13, 1521.
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¹⁴Traditionally the sacrifice consisted of cutting the heart out of the victim.

¹⁵Quauhtemoctzin was now the Aztec emperor.

¹⁶Darts sacred to Huitzilopochtli.

Amerindian Perspectives on French Civilization



17 ▼ A MI'KMAQ ELDER'S SPEECH TO FRENCH SETTLERS

When the first European explorers arrived in eastern Canada, the regions of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and parts of Quebec, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick were populated by the Mi'kmaqs (Micmacs), Algonquian speakers who had migrated from around the Great Lakes centuries earlier. Hunters and gatherers, the Mi'kmaqs lived on the coastline from spring to early fall, where they had a diet of fish, shellfish, eels, and birds, then during the winter moved inland where they hunted moose, beaver, bear, and caribou. The arrival of French traders quickly undermined this traditional way of life, as more and more Mi'kmaqs turned to the fur trade, exchanging beaver and bear pelts for the copper kettles, alcoholic beverages, and metal knives and axes offered by the French.

Although successful in drawing the Mi'kmaqs into their commercial endeavors, the French found it difficult to wean them from traditional beliefs and customs. From the beginning of their involvement in Canada the French had dreamed of turning the Native Americans into French-speaking Catholics who lived in farming settlements just as the French did in Europe and the St. Lawrence River valley. The first French missionaries assigned to the task of transforming the native peoples into French Catholics were the Recollets, members of the Franciscan order who began their work in New France in 1615. They soon were joined by Ursuline nuns, who were given the task of converting and "civilizing" Amerindian girls, and the wealthy and powerful Society of Jesus, which originally worked with the Recollets, but was given a monopoly for work in Canadian missions between 1632 and 1670. The French missionaries learned native languages, built schools and hospitals, and endured great hardships, but early results were discouraging. In the 1660s, an Ursuline nun admitted that of a hundred Native girls "that have passed through our hands, we have scarcely civilized one."

Some of the reasons for the missionaries' difficulties are revealed in the following speech, delivered by a Mi'kmaq elder to a group of French settlers and missionaries around 1670. It was recorded by Chrétien LeClerq, a Recollet father who had mastered the Mi'kmaq language. In 1691 he published his *New Relation of Gaspesia*, a book describing his experiences with the Mi'kmaqs on the Gaspé Peninsula, a rugged area of eastern Quebec that projects into the Gulf of St. Lawrence between Chaleur Bay and the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. The speech was in response to persistent French appeals that the Mi'kmaqs abandon their birch bark wigwams and begin living in permanent wooden homes. Such a step, it was hoped, would help "civilize" the Mi'kmaqs and make them better candidates for religious conversion by discouraging their seasonal migration.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What information about the Mi'kmaq way of life does the speech provide?
2. How much knowledge of France and French society does the Mi'kmaq speaker seem to have? What are his reasons for his belief in the inferiority of French ways?
3. What can be inferred from the elder's speech about French attitudes toward the Mi'kmaqs?
4. What can be inferred from the speech about the dealings between the French and the Mi'kmaqs and about the impact of the French on Mi'kmaq society?
5. How do views of Native Americans expressed in LeClerq's commentary on the speech compare with those of Montaigne in his essay, "On Cannibals" (Chapter 1 Vol. A, source 9)?
6. If given the opportunity to read the speech and LeClerq's commentary on it, what would have been the reactions of Las Casas and Sepúlveda (Chapter 1 Vol. A, sources 4 and 5)?

I pass without mention several other methods of camping which are in use among our Gaspesians,¹ because . . . they are all equally mean and miserable. But however that may be, the Indians esteem their camps as much as, and even more than, they do the most superb and commodious of our houses. To this they testified one day to some of our gentlemen . . . who, having asked me to serve them as interpreter in a visit which they wished to make to these Indians in order to make the latter understand that it would be much more advantageous for them to live and to build in our fashion, were extremely surprised when the leading Indian, who had listened with great patience to everything I had said to him on behalf of these gentlemen, answered me in these words: "I am greatly astonished that the French have so little cleverness, as they seem to exhibit in the matter of which you have just told me on their behalf, in the effort to persuade us to convert our poles, our barks, and our wigwams into those houses of stone and of wood which are tall and lofty, according to their account, as these trees. Very well! But why now," he continued,

"do men of five to six feet in height need houses which are sixty to eighty? For, in fact, as you know very well yourself — do we not find in our own all the conveniences and the advantages that you have with yours, such as resting, drinking, sleeping, eating, and amusing ourselves with our friends when we wish? This is not all," he said, addressing himself to one of our captains, "my brother, have you as much ingenuity and cleverness as the Indians, who carry their houses and their wigwams with them so that they may lodge wherever they please, independently of any lord whatsoever? You are not as bold nor as stout as we, because when you go on a voyage you cannot carry upon your shoulders your buildings and your edifices. Therefore it is necessary that you prepare as many lodgings as you make changes of residence, or else you live in a hired house which does not belong to you. As for us, we find ourselves secure from all these inconveniences, and we can always say, more truly than you, that we are at home everywhere, because we set up our wigwams with ease wherever we go, and without asking permission of anybody. You

¹The term LeClerq used for the Mi'kmaqs who lived on the Gaspé Peninsula.

reproach us, very inappropriately, that our country is a little hell in contrast with France, which you compare to a terrestrial paradise, inasmuch as it yields you, so you say, every kind of provision in abundance. You say to us also that we are the most miserable and most unhappy of all men, living without religion, without manners, without honor, without social order, and, in a word, without any rules, like the beasts in our woods and our forests, lacking bread, wine, and a thousand other comforts which you have in abundance in Europe. Well, my brother, if you do not yet know the real feelings which our Indians have towards your country and towards all your nation, it is proper that I inform you at once. I beg you now to believe that, as miserable as we seem in your eyes, we consider ourselves nevertheless much happier than you in this, that we are very content with the little that we have; and believe also once for all, I pray, that you deceive yourself greatly if you think to persuade us that your country is better than ours. For if France, as you say, is a little terrestrial paradise, are you reasonable to leave it? And why abandon wives, children, relatives, and friends? Why risk your life and your property every year, and why put yourself at risk, in any season whatsoever, to the storms and tempests of the sea in order to come to a strange and barbarous country which you consider the poorest and least fortunate of the world? Besides, since we are wholly convinced of the contrary, we scarcely take the trouble to go to France, because we fear, with good reason, lest we find little satisfaction there, seeing, in our own experience, that those who are natives thereof leave it every year in order to enrich themselves on our shores. We believe, further, that you are also incomparably poorer than we, and that you are not only simple journeymen, valets, servants, and slaves, all masters and grand captains though you may appear, seeing that you glory in our old rags and in our miserable suits of beaver which can no longer be of use to us, and that you find among us, in the fishery for cod which you make in these parts, the means to comfort your misery and the

poverty which oppresses you. As to us, we find all our riches and all our conveniences among ourselves, without trouble and without exposing our lives to the dangers in which you find yourselves constantly through your long voyages. And, while feeling compassion for you in the sweetness of our repose, we wonder at the anxieties and cares which you give yourselves night and day in order to load your ship. We see also that all your people live, as a rule, only upon cod which you catch among us. It is everlastingly nothing but cod — cod in the morning, cod at midday, cod at evening, and always cod, until things come to such a pass that if you wish some good morsels, it is at our expense; and you are obliged to depend on the Indians, whom you despise so much, and to beg them to go a-hunting that you may feast. Now tell me this one little thing, if you have any sense: Which of these two is the wiser and happier — he who labors without ceasing and only obtains, and that with great trouble, enough to live on, or he who rests in comfort and finds all that he needs in the pleasure of hunting and fishing? It is true," he added, "that we have not always had the use of bread and of wine which your France produces; but, in fact, before the arrival of the French in these parts, did not the Gaspesians live much longer than now? And if we have not any longer among us any of those old men of a hundred and thirty to forty years, it is only because we are gradually adopting your manner of living, for experience is making it very plain that those of us live longest who, despising your bread, your wine, and your brandy, are content with their natural food of beaver, of moose, of waterfowl, and fish, in accord with the custom of our ancestors and of all the Gaspesian nation. Learn now, my brother, once for all, because I must open to you my heart: there is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely happier and more powerful than the French." He finished his speech by the following last words, saying that an Indian could find his living everywhere, and that he could call himself the lord and the sovereign of his country, because he could reside there just

as freely as it pleased him, with every kind of rights of hunting and fishing, without any anxiety, more content a thousand times in the woods and in his wigwam than if he were in palaces and at the tables of the greatest princes of the earth.

No matter what can be said of this reasoning, I assert, for my part, that I should consider these Indians incomparably more fortunate than ourselves, and that the life of these barbarians would even be capable of inspiring envy, if they had the instructions, the understanding, and the same means for their salvation which God has given us that we may save ourselves by preference over so many poor pagans, and as a result of His pity;

for, after all, their lives are not vexed by a thousand annoyances as are ours. . . . Possessing nothing of their own, they are consequently free from trickery and legal proceedings in connection with inheritances from their relatives. . . . All their ambition centers in surprising and killing quantities of beavers, moose, seals, and other wild beasts in order to obtain their meat for food and their skins for clothing. They live in great harmony, never quarreling and never beating one another except in drunkenness. On the contrary, they mutually aid one another in their needs with much charity and without self-seeking. There is continual joy in their wigwams. . . .

Land and Labor in Spanish America

Throughout its more than three centuries of existence the Spanish Empire in the Americas was based on the economic exploitation of Native Americans. This was already evident as early as the 1490s when Columbus sought to found a permanent Spanish settlement on Hispaniola, the island he had discovered on his first voyage in 1492. The island's first Spanish settlers were determined that their new life across the Atlantic would make them wealthy, and this spelled disaster for the island's native Arawaks, who were robbed of their food, drafted to work in the Spaniards' homes, fields, and mines, and in some cases enslaved. In 1497 Columbus attempted to impose some discipline on the rapaciousness of his countrymen by allocating specific groups of Arawaks to his followers, who could demand tribute and labor from these Indians and these Indians alone. This system brought prosperity to a rapidly growing Spanish population, but it was short-lived. By the mid sixteenth century slaves imported from Africa were doing much of the Spaniards' work on Hispaniola. Victims of agricultural disruption, harsh labor, and epidemics, the Arawaks, who numbered one million in 1492, no longer existed.

Elsewhere in Spain's colonial empire the effects of forced labor on the native peoples were less catastrophic, but economic realities were no different than on Hispaniola. Clearly, the New World would yield no income to the monarchy, nor would colonists be willing to settle in the Americas unless the Amerindians were forced to work for the Spaniards, pay them tribute, or both. This rarely meant slavery. As a result of royal legislation, enslavement of Native Americans was tolerated only in peripheral areas of the empire such as Chile and Argentina, where persistent native resistance to Spanish authority seemed to justify it. Although not slaves, Indians might be assigned to work for an individual Spanish landowner, or *encomendero*; required to pay tribute to individuals or the state;

subjected to state-controlled labor drafts; or forced in the open market to accept pittance wages for their work.

This need for Indian labor raised perplexing and hotly debated questions among Spanish landowners, clergy, and royal officials. Through what mechanisms should the Indians be compelled to work for the Spaniards? What kind of work could they reasonably be asked to do? When did Indian labor cross the line from reasonable work to the kind of brutal exploitation that contributed to the demise of the Arawaks? Most fundamentally, how was it possible to reconcile the need to compel Indians to work with the need to convert them to Christianity, civilize them, and treat them as fellow human beings? The Spaniards never found satisfactory answers to questions such as these, even after more than three hundred years of colonial rule.

Exploitation versus Amerindian Rights in the Encomienda System



18 ▼ *ENCOMIENDA REGULATIONS IN PARAGUAY, 1556*

In 1503 the Spanish government sought to regulate and refine the utilization of Arawak labor on Hispaniola by giving the island's governor, Nicholas de Ovando, authority to gather the Arawaks into villages where they would be placed under the authority of a Spanish trustee, or *encomendero*. The *encomendero* received the right to extract tribute and labor from the Arawaks, but he also assumed responsibility for their material and spiritual welfare. This was the beginnings of the *encomienda* system, a method of forced Indian labor that soon spread to Mexico and South America, and still existed in parts of Spanish America at the close of the colonial era.

The subject of frequent royal legislation and countless court cases, the *encomienda* system varied from place to place and over time. Grants of Indians might be as small as one hundred, or, as was the case with the *encomienda* of Cortés in Mexico, as large as one hundred thousand. In the Caribbean islands Indians held by *encomenderos* were required to make tribute payments and provide labor in agriculture, gold mining, domestic service, and construction projects. In Mexico, however, demands were limited to tribute payments in agricultural products, textiles, or cash. In Venezuela and Paraguay, mainly labor was required.

In most of the Spanish Empire the *encomienda* system was short-lived. It disappeared in the 1540s in the Caribbean as a result of depopulation, and several decades later in Mexico and Peru as a result of unprofitability and royal legislation designed to suppress a labor system too easily abused by holders of *encomiendas*. The *encomienda* system lasted longest in peripheral regions of the empire such as Paraguay, Chile, and northern Argentina, where Spanish administrators often were negligent in enforcing laws and Spaniards would have been unwilling to settle without access to forced Indian labor.

From its beginnings the *encomienda* system represented an effort by Spanish officials to balance the need to utilize cheap Indian labor and their sense of obligation to Christianize the Indians and protect them from blatant exploitation and cruelty. Such concerns are revealed in the following set of rules concerning *encomiendas* in Paraguay issued by the territory's first governor, Domingo Martinez de Irala, in 1556. Note that the regulations deal largely with labor exactions. No tribute was demanded, because it was believed that the Guana and Guarani peoples who populated the region produced nothing of value to the Spaniards.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to these regulations, what specific demands can the *encomenderos* make on the Indians allocated to them?
2. What specific provisions are made to protect the interests and well-being of the Indians held in *encomienda*?
3. What can you infer from these regulations about the motives of Spanish officials in their efforts to protect the Indians from abuses?
4. What provisions have been made to ensure the enforcement of these regulations? In your opinion, how adequate are these provisions in protecting the Indians from abuse?

First we order and command that all the Indians that have been allocated and commended . . . shall be obliged to obey the *principales*¹ and headmen that they may have or may be placed over them; and they shall not move, go, or absent themselves from their homes and *pueblos*² to other *pueblos* and houses or any other places, living and remaining there all the time that God leaves them life; and if their *principales* or headmen should move to another place or seat as an improvement, then all of them shall also move with him; and the persons to whom they are commended shall compel and force them to do this and carry it out under penalties established at the will of the judicial authorities; . . .

Also, we order and command that with regard to the persons to whom the said Indians belong or may be commended, it is prohibited for them to obtain, ask for, or procure through trade any Indian woman from the Indians . . . under pain

of the suspension of the service of the said Indians for the time of one year.

Also, we order and command that because the said Indians are so few, and because it would encourage the growth and settlement of the country not to give them excessive labor . . . the persons to whom they belong and may be granted in *encomienda* are prohibited, without the express consent of the said Indians, from giving or loaning them to other persons for any labor or service, or from receiving any payment for this; and when it might happen that such labor was agreed to both by the *encomendero* and the said Indians, it can be done when both parties thus agree to it and not in any other manner for a job in which the work is suitable and bearable, and the payment shall be received and enjoyed by the said Indians for themselves. . . .

Also, we order and command that the said Indians will be and are obligated to serve the

¹Spanish for the Indians' *chieftains*.

²Spanish for *villages*.

persons to whom they are commended in building and repairing their houses, in farming, stock raising, hunting, fishing, and other enterprises that may be carried on in the country, and they shall obey him and carry out his orders under the penalties that may be imposed at the will of the judge, and so that the work of building and cultivating may be moderated and assessed, we prohibit such persons from building houses or clearing fields to sell beyond those they need to live in and support themselves. . . .

Also, we order and command that the persons to whom the said Indians belong and are commended, as was said, shall be obliged to treat them very well and to favor and support them in everything possible, giving them moderate rather than excessive labor in accord with the intention of His Majesty . . . , treating them like relatives, instructing and indoctrinating them in the things of our Holy Catholic faith, as well as possible considering the land and the time, reprimanding them and weaning them from their vices and evil customs, so that their souls can be saved by means of divine grace and mercy; and the persons who take on this work shall be especially deserving with God, and we make this a charge on the conscience of these persons, and not on those of His Majesty or ours in his Royal name.

Also we order and command that no one be permitted to employ in his service more than the fourth part of the Indians granted to him in *encomienda* at the same time, so that they will not make them abandon their houses, and only in case of clear and recognized necessity can they order up to one half to serve as this may occur, but this will seldom be necessary; the penalty for violation shall be the said three thousand *maravedis*.³ . . .

Also, we order and command that whenever these persons may go to visit the Indians that

belong and are commended to them, when they go to their houses and villages, they shall not make bold to do them any injury or to allow the people of the land or the *criados*⁴ they take with them to do them any; nor shall they beg, demand, take, or obtain in trade any of the things they may have inside or outside of their houses, since they are only allowed to ask for and the Indians are only obliged to give them three days' worth of their normal food supplies, without having to give them chickens or pigs they may have, unless they wish to do so of their own will in return for a moderate payment; and the chickens, livestock, and other things they may have there cannot be touched, taken, or consumed by the *encomenderos* without the permission of their owners; and if they should be consumed for some necessity, [the *encomenderos*] shall be obliged to pay for them. . . .

Also, we order and command that the said Indian *principales* be obliged, whenever a message is sent them with an Indian, to order Indians to go and do what they are commanded to, and also to send the Indians needed to live in the houses of their *encomenderos* during the times or months of the year they are required, serving and doing what they may be ordered, on condition that their *encomenderos* feed them and care for them when ill, indoctrinate them as stated, help them to die well, and teach them the best order and manner of living they can; . . .

Also, we order and command that these persons [the *encomenderos*] try to have two or three children of ten years or less from their *encomiendas* in their houses, so that they can learn to live as Christians and see and understand the things of God and His Holy Church and the proper manner of living, so that when they reach the age of twelve or thirteen years they can return to their homes and teach and instruct their parents, brothers, and other relatives; . . .

³Thirty-four *maravedis* equaled one *real*; eight reales equaled one *peso*. An ordinance issued in Paraguay in 1541 stated that one *maravedi* was worth one fishhook in value, and twenty-five *maravedis* were worth one large knife.

⁴Spanish for *servants*.

Also, we order and command that if the said Indians, either *principales* or ordinary Indians, should come to make just complaint over ill treatment, violence, injuries, or excessive labor, they should be heard by the judicial authorities and [their rights] maintained and protected, and if some person or persons should mistreat or punish them for this, they shall incur the penalties stated in the preceding ordinance;⁵ and with regard to this and the violence, injury, and other crimes that may be committed, the testimony of the Indians shall be accepted, as long as it is supported and the Indians are not suborned or induced. . . .

Also, we order and command that every year after the said Indians are allocated to serve and pay tribute to their *encomenderos*, *visitadores* shall be sent out through all of the country and its districts with solemn judicial authority, a notary, and an interpreter, receiving authority and instructions from the person governing in addition to being obliged for the carrying out of these ordinances, in order that they may carry out a visitation of the country and the Indians and collect testimony concerning the acts of violence, injuries, and other crimes committed, and to arrest the Christians and Indians implicated and bring them as prisoners to this city, so that justice may be done in everything and the relief, welfare, benefit, conservation, and pacification

of the Indians may be obtained as His Majesty has ordered and charged. . . .

Also we order and command that . . . [if any Indians] should rebel and refuse to serve and pay tribute to their *encomenderos*, with the license and authority of the person governing, [men] can go to pacify, settle, and reduce these Indians to the service of His Majesty with the *caudillo*⁷ or captain appointed for them and with the help of the obedient Indians, and the persons who hold *encomiendas* of Indians in these provinces, shall be obliged to go personally on foot or horseback with their arms at their own cost, or to send others in their place if there is some just impediment or illness that prevents them from going. . . .

And we command that these ordinances and each and every one of them be communicated and explained to all the Indians, when . . . there may be sufficient interpreters, so that it may come to the attention of all of them, and of [Indians in] other, separate villages that have not been granted in *encomienda*, so that they may understand, see, and recognize their condition and advantage and the manner in which they should live in order to be saved. Also, we command that these ordinances be read, affixed, and made public in this city so that they may come to the attention of all and no one can pretend ignorance of any part of them. . . .

⁵The reference is to the fine of three thousand *maravedis*.

⁶Spanish for *visitors*; judges or other officials sent out to investigate conditions of *encomiendas*.

⁷Spanish for *military commander*.

The “Mountain of Silver” and the Mita System



19 ▼ Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa, COMPENDIUM AND DESCRIPTION OF THE WEST INDIES

In 1545 an Indian herder lost his footing on a mountain in the eastern range of the Andes while chasing a llama. To keep from falling he grabbed a bush, which he uprooted to reveal a rich vein of silver. This is the most popular story of how the world learned of the world's richest silver mine, at Potosí, in modern Bolivia. Located two miles above sea level in a cold, desolate region, Potosí became the site of the Western Hemisphere's first mining boom town. By the late 1500s Potosí had a racially mixed population of 160,000, making it the largest, wildest, gaudiest city in the New World. With one-fifth of its extracted silver going to the Spanish crown, Potosí was a major reason why Spanish kings were able to carry on their massive military campaigns against Protestants in Europe and Muslims in the Mediterranean.

The backbone of the Potosí operation was a system of government-controlled draft labor known as the *repartimiento* (“distribution”) system and widely practiced throughout Spanish America. In Peru it was known as the *mita* (Quechua for “time” or “distribution”) system, a term used by the Incas for their own preconquest system of required state labor. In the *repartimiento* and *mita* systems native communities were ordered to supply a proportion of their population at fixed intervals for assignment to particular tasks. In their original form these labor drafts may well have been less burdensome than what was required in the *encomienda* system. Required work was distributed more evenly throughout the community, and an individual might go months or even years without being called for labor service. But as revealed in the following document, the *mita* system still caused hardship and disruption for Indian communities.

The following description of the *mita* system is provided by Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa (d. 1630), a Spanish Carmelite friar who abandoned an academic career to perform priestly work in the Americas. During his retirement in the 1620s, he wrote a half a dozen books on Spanish America and his experiences as a priest. His best-known work is his *Compendium and Description of the West Indies*, a summary of his observations of conditions in Mexico and Spanish South America. In this excerpt he describes the mercury mines and facilities at Huancavelica and then Potosí itself.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What was the range of annual wages for each laborer at Huancavelica? How did this amount of money compare with the annual salary of the royal hospital chaplain? How did the annual sum of the workers' wages compare with the cost of tallow candles at Potosí? Compare the wages of the *mita*

- workers at Potosí with the wages paid those Amerindians who freely hired themselves out. What do you conclude from all these figures?
2. What were the major hazards connected with the extraction and production of gold and silver?
 3. What evidence does this source provide of Spanish concern for the welfare of the Indian workers? What evidence of indifference does it provide? Where does the weight of the evidence seem to lie?
 4. What appears to have been the impact of the mita system on native Peruvian society?

HUANCABELICA

. . . It contains 400 Spanish residents, as well as many temporary shops of dealers in merchandise and groceries, heads of trading houses, and transients, for the town has a lively commerce. It has a parish church with vicar and curate,¹ a Dominican convent, and a Royal Hospital under the Brethren of San Juan de Dios for the care of the sick, especially Indians on the range; it has a chaplain with a salary of 800 pesos² contributed by His Majesty; he is curate of the parish of San Sebastian de Indios, for the Indians who have come to work in the mines and who have settled down there. . . .

Every two months His Majesty sends by the regular courier from Lima³ 60,000 pesos to pay for the mita of the Indians, for the crews are changed every two months, so that merely for the Indian mita payment (in my understanding of it) 360,000 pesos are sent from Lima every year, not to speak of much besides, which all crosses at his risk that cold and desolate mountain country which is the puna⁴ and has nothing on it but llama ranches.

Up on the range there are 3,000 or 4,000 Indians working in the mine; it is colder up there than in the town, since it is higher. The mine where the mercury is located is a large layer which

they keep following downward. When I was in that town [in 1616] I went up on the range and down into the mine, which at that time was considerably more than 130 stades⁵ deep. The ore was very rich black flint, and the excavation so extensive that it held more than 3,000 Indians working away hard with picks and hammers, breaking up that flint ore; and when they have filled their little sacks, the poor fellows, loaded down with ore, climb up those ladders or rigging, some like masts and others like cables, and so trying and distressing that a man empty-handed can hardly get up them. That is the way they work in this mine, with many lights and the loud noise of the pounding and great confusion. Nor is that the greatest evil and difficulty; that is due to thievish and undisciplined superintendents. As that great vein of ore keeps going down deeper and they follow its rich trail, in order to make sure that no section of that ore shall drop on top of them, they keep leaving supports or pillars of the ore itself, even if of the richest quality, and they necessarily help to sustain and insure each section with less risk. This being so, there are men so heartless that for the sake of stealing a little rich ore, they go down out of hours and deprive the innocent Indians of this protection by hollowing into these pillars to steal the rich ore in them, and then a great

¹A parish priest and his assistant priest.

²A standard Spanish coin worth eight *reals* (note 9).

³Lima was the capital city of the viceroyalty of Peru, one of the two major administrative units of Spanish America, covering all of South America except part of the Caribbean

coast. Appointed by the crown, the viceroy was the chief military and civil administrator.

⁴A high, cold plateau.

⁵A stade was a measure of length, approximately an eighth of a mile.

section is apt to fall in and kill all the Indians, and sometimes the unscrupulous and grasping superintendents themselves, as happened when I was in that locality; and much of this is kept quiet so that it shall not come to the notice of the manager and cause the punishment of the accomplices. . . .

POTOSÍ

According to His Majesty's warrant, the mine owners on this massive range have a right to the mita of 13,300 Indians in the working and exploitation of the mines, both those which have been discovered, those now discovered, and those which shall be discovered. It is the duty of the Corregidor⁶ of Potosí to have them rounded up and to see that they come in from all the provinces between Cuzco over the whole of El Collao and as far as the frontiers of Tarija and Tomina;⁷ this Potosí Corregidor has power and authority over all the Corregidores in those provinces mentioned; for if they do not fill the Indian mita allotment assigned each of them in accordance with the capacity of their provinces as indicated to them, he can send them, and does, salaried inspectors to report upon it, and when the remissness is great or remarkable, he can suspend them, notifying the Viceroy of the fact.

These Indians are sent out every year under a captain whom they choose in each village or tribe, for him to take them and oversee them for the year each has to serve; every year they have a new election, for as some go out, others come in. This works out very badly, with great losses and gaps in the quotas of Indians, the villages being depopulated; and this gives rise to great extortions and abuses on the part of the inspectors toward the poor Indians, ruining them and thus depriving the . . . chief Indians of their property and carrying them off in chains because they do not fill out the mita assignment, which they cannot

do, for the reason given and for others which I do not bring forward.

These 13,300 are divided up every 4 months into 3 mitas, each consisting of 4,433 Indians, to work in the mines on the range and in the 120 smelters in the Potosí and Tarapaya areas; it is a good league⁸ between the two. These mita Indians earn each day, or there is paid each one for his labor, 4 reals.⁹ Besides these there are others not under obligation, who are mingados or hire themselves out voluntarily: these each get from 12 to 16 reals, and some up to 24, according to their reputation of wielding the pick and knowing how to get the ore out. These mingados will be over 4,000 in number. They and the mita Indians go up every Monday morning to the locality of Guayna Potosí which is at the foot of the range; the Corregidor arrives with all the provincial captains or chiefs who have charge of the Indians assigned them, and he there checks off and reports to each mine and smelter owner the number of Indians assigned him for his mine or smelter; that keeps him busy till 1 p.m., by which time the Indians are already turned over to these mine and smelter owners.

After each has eaten his ration, they climb up the hill, each to his mine, and go in, staying there from that hour until Saturday evening without coming out of the mine; their wives bring them food, but they stay constantly underground, excavating and carrying out the ore from which they get the silver. They all have tallow candles, lighted day and night; that is the light they work with, for as they are underground, they have need of it all the time. The mere cost of these candles used in the mines on this range will amount every year to more than 300,000 pesos, even though tallow is cheap in that country, being abundant; but this is a very great expense, and it is almost incredible, how much is spent for candles in the operation of breaking down and getting out the ore.

⁶A district military officer.

⁷This region consisted of approximately 139 villages.

⁸Approximately three miles.

⁹A Spanish silver coin (see note 2).

These Indians have different functions in the handling of the silver ore; some break it up with bar or pick, and dig down in, following the vein in the mine; others bring it up; others up above keep separating the good and the poor in piles; others are occupied in taking it down from the range to the mills on herds of llamas; every day they bring up more than 8,000 of these native beasts of burden for this task. These teamsters who carry the metal do not belong to the mita, but are mingados — hired.

So huge is the wealth which has been taken out of this range since the year 1545, when it was discovered, up to the present year of 1628, which makes 83 years that they have been working and reducing its ores, that merely from the registered mines, as appears from an examination of most of the accounts in the royal records, 326,000,000 assay¹⁰ pesos have been taken out. At the beginning when the ore was richer and easier to get out, for then there were no mita Indians and no mercury process, in the 40 years between 1545 and 1585, they took out 111,000,000 of assay silver. From the year 1585 up to 1628, 43 years, although the mines are harder to work, for they are deeper down, with the assistance of 13,300

Indians whom His Majesty has granted to the mine owners on that range, and of other hired Indians, who come there freely and voluntarily to work at day's wages, and with the great advantage of the mercury process, in which none of the ore or the silver is wasted, and with the better knowledge of the technique which the miners now have, they have taken out 215,000,000 assay pesos. That, plus the 111 extracted in the 40 years previous to 1585, makes 326,000,000 assay pesos, not counting the great amount of silver secretly taken from these mines . . . to Spain, paying no 20 percent or registry fee, and to other countries outside Spain; and to the Philippines and China, which is beyond all reckoning; but I should venture to imagine and even assert that what has been taken from the Potosí range must be as much again as what paid the 20 percent royal impost.¹¹

Over and above that, such great treasure and riches have come from the Indies in gold and silver from all the other mines in New Spain and Peru, Honduras, the New Kingdom of Granada, Chile, New Galicia, New Vizcaya,¹² and other quarters since the discovery of the Indies, that they exceed 1,800 millions.

¹⁰Measured so that silver content met official standards.

¹¹The "20 percent royal impost" was the one-fifth of all New World silver owed to the Spanish crown.

¹²New Galicia and New Vizcaya were regions and administrative jurisdictions in New Spain located in north-central and northwestern Mexico.

The Evils of Cochineal



20 ▼ *DELIBERATIONS OF THE TLAXCALAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, MARCH 1553*

Accounts of the Native Americans' postconquest experience justifiably center on themes of decline, destruction, and demoralization, but this is not a totally accurate picture. In the economic sphere, despite Spanish demands for tribute and labor, Indians in Mexico and elsewhere in the sixteenth century maintained much of their traditional agricultural way of life while simultaneously taking advantage of new opportunities provided by the arrival of the Spaniards. Evidence of

such economic adjustments and their consequences in Tlaxcala, a Mexican province to the east of Tenochtitlán/Mexico City, is provided in the following document.

The single province in preconquest central Mexico to maintain its independence from the Aztecs, Tlaxcala was defeated by Cortés in September 1519 and then became Cortés's ally in his campaign against the Aztecs and later conquests in southern Mexico and Central America. With the establishment of Spanish authority, the Tlaxcalans, like other Mexican peoples, were subject to labor conscription and tribute payments, but in some ways they received preferential treatment because of their alliance with Cortés. Spanish civilians were prevented from permanently residing in Tlaxcala until the seventeenth century; Tlaxcalan communal property rights were protected; and the *encomienda* system was never imposed. In addition, the political powers and privileges of Tlaxcalan noblemen were preserved. The main institution through which the nobles exercised their political authority was the Tlaxcalan *cabildo*, or municipal council, made up of twenty-one officials chosen from a list of approximately 220 noblemen who also served as electors. The *cabildo* interacted with Spanish officials, collected tribute, oversaw religious festivals, and maintained churches, municipal buildings, and roads. And, as revealed in the following document, it also petitioned Spanish authorities for legislative action to address perceived problems in the Tlaxcalan community.

In this instance the problem was cochineal, a brilliant red dye produced from the dried bodies of female cochineal insects, a species that thrives on the nopal cactus of central and southern Mexico. The market for cochineal expanded to all of Europe after the Spanish conquest, and many Indians were quick to take advantage of the increased demand. In the eyes of the noblemen on the Tlaxcalan *cabildo*, this was not without its negative results.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does this document reveal about the relative political authority of the Tlaxcalan municipal council and the Spanish colonial administration?
2. How, according to this document, has the booming cochineal trade affected religion and morality among the Tlaxcalan people?
3. What role is played by women in getting cochineal to the market? Why do the members of the municipal council find their role disturbing?
4. To what degree does the Tlaxcalan trade in cochineal provide evidence of Spanish involvement in the region's economy?
5. According to the members of the municipal council, how has the boom in cochineal affected social relationships and attitudes? In their analysis of these changes, how do the council members reveal their bias as noblemen?

They deliberated about how the cochineal cactus, from which cochineal comes, is being planted all over Tlaxcala. Everyone does nothing but take care of cochineal cactus; no longer is care taken that maize and other edibles are planted. For food — maize, chilis, and beans — and other things that people need were once not expensive in Tlaxcala. It is because of this neglect, the cabildo members considered, that all the foods are becoming expensive. The owners of cochineal cactus merely buy maize, chilis, etc., and are very occupied only with their cochineal, by which their money, cacao beans,¹ and cloth are acquired. They no longer want to cultivate their fields, but idly neglect them. Because of this, now many fields are going to grass, and famine truly impends. Things are no longer as they were long ago, for the cochineal cactus is making people lazy. And it is excessive how sins are committed against our Lord God. These cochineal owners devote themselves to their cochineal on Sundays and holy days; no longer do they go to church to hear mass as the holy church commands us, but look only to getting their sustenance and their cacao, which makes them proud. And then later they buy pulque² and then get drunk; all of the cochineal owners gather together. If they buy a turkey, they give it away for less than its price, and pulque, too; they lightly give away their money and cacao. Not remembering how our lord God mercifully granted them whatever wealth is theirs, they vainly squander it. And he who belonged to someone no longer respects whoever was his lord and master, because he is seen to have gold and cacao. That makes them proud and swells them up, whereby it is fully evident that they esteem themselves only through wealth. And also the cochineal dealers, some of them noblemen, some commoners, and some women,

line up here in the Tlaxcala marketplace and there await the cochineal. When they are not collecting cochineal quickly, then they go to the various homes of the cochineal owners, entering the houses. And there many things happen; they make the women drunk there, and there some commit sins. They go entering the homes of anyone who has cochineal plants; they already know those from whom they customarily buy dye, and sometimes they also go on Sundays and holy days, whereby they miss attending mass and hearing the sermon, but go only wanting to get drunk. And these cochineal dealers act as if the women who gather dye have been made their relatives.³ Some of the men hire themselves out to Spaniards to gather dye for them, and they give them money and cacao. And later they distribute the women to them, making them like their relatives; to some they assign seven or eight (women), or thereabouts, to gather dye for them. Because of this many improper things are done. And of those who hire themselves out, many are likewise ruined, because some act as slaves in the hands of the Spaniards. If it were not for cochineal, they would not become such. And both the cactus owners and the cochineal dealers so act that for little reason they begin to pair with each other,⁴ or take another as co-godparents, or just feed one another, gathering and collecting together with their wives. They feed one another, however many of them there are; they give one another a great deal of food, and the chocolate they drink is very thick, with plenty of cacao in it. When they find the chocolate just a little watery, then it is not to their liking and they do not want to drink it. Some pour it on the ground, whereby whoever has given his very good cacao to someone is affronted, but they imagine themselves very grand because

¹In addition to being the main ingredient in chocolate, the cacao bean was a unit of money. Two hundred cacao beans equaled one tomine; eight tomines made one peso.

²A fermented beverage made from the maguey plant; the most widely consumed intoxicating beverage in colonial Mexico.

³By this is meant that the women perform limitless labor for the cochineal dealers in much the same way that people related by blood would selflessly serve one another.

⁴The meaning of this Nahuatl phrase is unclear; it may simply mean that dealers and growers become close friends and cooperate with one another.

of it. And also then they buy pulque or Castilian wine,⁵ even though it is very expensive, they pay no heed, but give the price to the person selling it. And then they become entirely inebriated and senseless, together with their wives; they fall down one at a time where they are congregated, entirely drunk. Many sins are committed there, and it all comes from cochineal. Also these cochineal dealers no longer want to cultivate the soil; though some of them own fields, they no longer want to cultivate; they do nothing but look for cochineal. And both the cactus owners and the cochineal dealers, some of them, sleep on cotton mats, and their wives wear great skirts, and they have much money, cacao, and clothing. The wealth they have only makes them proud and swaggering. For before cochineal was known and everyone planted cochineal cactus, it was not this way. There were some people of whom it was clearly evident that they lived in knowledge of their humility, but just because of the cochineal now there is much drunkenness and swaggering; it is very clear that cochineal has been making people idle in the last eight or nine years. But in the old days there was a time of much care in cultivation and planting; everyone cultivated the soil and planted. Because of this, the cabildo members said it is necessary that the cochineal cactus decrease and not so much be planted, since it causes idleness. It is greatly urged that everyone cultivate and plant; let much maize, chili beans, and all edible plants be grown, because if our lord God should wish that famine

come, and if there are in people's possession much money, cacao, and cloth, will those things be eaten? Will there be salvation through them? It cannot be. Money, cacao, and cloth do not fill one. But if people have much food, through it they will save themselves, since no one will starve; no one will die being wealthy. Therefore two or three times the lord viceroy who presides in Mexico City, don Luis de Velasco, has been told and it has been brought to his attention how the dye brings affliction, and he has been informed of all the harm done. And after that the lord viceroy gave orders in reply, ordering the lord corregidor that in his presence there be consultation here in the cabildo to approve how many plantings of cochineal cactus are to be kept by each person; it is to be a definite number, and no longer will there be planting at whim. And in consulting, some of the cabildo members said that five plantings of cochineal cactus should be kept (by each person), and others said that fifteen should be kept. But when the discussion was complete, everyone approved keeping ten plantings of cactus, and the lord corregidor also approved it. No one is to exceed (the number). And the women who gather dye in the marketplace are to gather dye no more. Nevertheless, it is first to be put before the lord viceroy; what he should order in reply will then be made public. Then in the cabildo were appointed those who will go to Mexico City to set before the lord viceroy what was discussed as said above.

⁵Spanish wine from the province of Castile.

Chapter 6

The Islamic Heartland and India

In the early thirteenth century Mongol warriors under the legendary conqueror Chinggis Khan descended on Southwest Asia. After overrunning Persia, defeating the Seljuk Turks in 1243 in Asia Minor, and obliterating the enfeebled Abbasid Empire in 1258, the Mongols incorporated much of the region into their vast empire that stretched from Hungary to Korea. As Mongol political authority declined in the fourteenth century, Southwest Asia became a battleground for local dynasties, religious sects, nomad armies, and military adventurers, the most notable of whom was Timur the Lame, the Turko-Mongol conqueror whose large but short-lived empire collapsed after his death in 1405. Although India was spared the Mongol onslaught, its political history, especially in the north, was as chaotic and turbulent as Southwest Asia's. In the fourteenth century it was nominally ruled by the sultanate of Delhi, but the regime had already been undermined by revolt and warfare by the time Timur the Lame's devastating raid into northern India dealt it a death blow in 1398. Following the sultanate's demise India fractured into hundreds of states of varying sizes and degrees of effectiveness.

Following these years of conquest and upheaval, three dominant empires emerged in South and Southwest Asia between the mid fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The first empire to take shape was that of the Ottoman Turks, a seminomadic people who migrated to Anatolia in the 1200s and almost immediately embarked on conquests that expanded their state in Anatolia and extended it into southeastern Europe. In 1453 they conquered the last remnant of the Byzantine Empire when they captured the imperial city, Constantinople, and, as Istanbul, made it the seat of their sultan's expanding state. During the 1500s the Ottomans ruled an empire that included Egypt, Anatolia, Syria, and lands in

North Africa, and the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and southeastern Europe. Meanwhile, on the Ottoman Empire's eastern flank in the early sixteenth century, Ismail I created the Safavid Empire in Persia, distinguished by its rulers' fervent devotion to Shi'ite Islam. Finally, during the 1500s, the Mughal Empire emerged in India as a result of the conquests of Babur (1483–1530), a military adventurer from central Asia who won control of northwest India, and his grandson, Akbar (1542–1605), who extended Mughal authority to the east and south.

In addition to their leaders' common allegiance to Islam, these three empires resembled one another in several respects. Each was established through military conquest, each was ruled by an all-powerful emperor, and each was a formidable military power. In each, the arts and literature flourished. Each at first rested on a strong economic foundation, and each experienced the weakening of that foundation by inflation, high taxation, bureaucratic corruption, and broad changes in the world economy.

Differences among the three empires were most pronounced in the sphere of religion. The intense devotion of the Safavids to Shi'ism antagonized the Sunni Ottomans, and led to frequent Ottoman-Safavid wars. Furthermore, Safavid Persia was unique in that it lacked a substantial non-Muslim population. In contrast, the Ottomans' subjects in Europe were overwhelmingly Christian, and a smaller number of Christians and Jews was scattered throughout the rest of their empire. Most of the Mughals' subjects were Hindus.

The three empires also had different experiences with Europeans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Ottomans and Europeans were archrivals, each representing to the other a despised religion, and, moreover, a threat to their territory and commerce. European and Ottoman fleets clashed over supremacy in the Mediterranean, and their armies fought for control of southeastern Europe. Nonetheless, European merchants continued to trade and even reside in Ottoman cities, and European powers such as France forged military alliances with Christendom's enemy when it suited their purposes.

Relations between Europeans and Safavid Persia, on the other hand, were more cordial. Shah Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) relied on European military advisers and sent two missions to Europe in 1599 and 1608 to explore the possibility of joint action against the Ottoman Turks.

In India the Portuguese quickly capitalized on the success of Vasco da Gama's voyage around Africa to Calicut in 1498. They undercut the monopoly of Arab merchants in the spice trade on the west Indian coast and established a base of operations on the island of Goa, which they forcibly annexed from the local Muslim ruler. The Dutch, English, and French became seriously involved in India only after 1600. They, too, established commercial operations on the coast, but only after having gained the permission of a local ruler or a Mughal official. Emperors Akbar and Jahangir were interested in European art and religion, but overall the Mughals viewed Europe neither as a threat nor a potential trading partner or ally of any significance.

By the mid seventeenth century all three Islamic empires were beginning to decline. The Mughal and Safavid empires disappeared in the eighteenth century, and the Ottoman Empire, although it survived until after World War I, gradually became a symbol of decrepitude and decay. Yet in the 1500s and 1600s, few other societies, if any, could rival these three empires' wealth, cultural sophistication, and military strength.

Rulers and Their Challenges in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires

Many factors — resources, wealth, technological development, social coherence, cultural unity, and military strength — contribute to the rise and fall of states. But as the histories of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires confirm, quality of rule is also significant, especially when authority is exercised by a single all-powerful ruler. Each of these empires flourished under strong, energetic rulers who quashed dissent, maintained bureaucratic rigor, acted decisively, and provided effective military leadership. But gradually the quality of rulers declined, and this, along with other factors, contributed to economic stagnation, territorial loss, and military decay.

The emergence of all three empires confirms the importance of leadership, especially on the battlefield. The Ottoman state resulted from the conquests of three men — Mehmet II (r. 1451–1481), who directed the siege of Constantinople in 1453; Selim I (r. 1512–1520), who conquered Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and parts of southern and western Arabia; and Suleiman I (r. 1520–1566), who added Hungary, the Mediterranean island of Rhodes, and some Persian territory to Ottoman domains. The Safavid Empire was forged through the exploits of Shaykh Ismail (r. 1501–1524), a military and religious leader whose original power base was Azerbaijan in northern Persia. Believed by his followers to be a descendant of the

Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, he conquered Persia and in 1501 assumed the title *shah*, or emperor. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, was a military adventurer of Mongol-Turkish ancestry who invaded India after having lost his original kingdom in Afghanistan. In 1526 he led an army of twelve thousand troops into northern India and, with superior tactics and firepower, defeated the much larger army of the ruling Muslim Lodi Dynasty.

The cultural achievements of these Islamic empires also depended on the interests and patronage of individual rulers. Akbar (r. 1556–1605), a brilliant military commander whose conquests substantially expanded the Mughal Empire, patronized painters, poets, historians, and religious thinkers. Under his free-spending successors, Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658), Mughal culture reached new heights. The Taj Mahal, one of the world's most beautiful buildings, is only one of many masterpieces they planned and paid for. Under Shah Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) the Safavid capital, Isfahan, was transformed through the construction of hundreds of mosques, formal gardens, palaces, royal tombs, and public squares. Similarly, the early Ottoman sultans, following the precedent of Mehmet II, who had the Greek Orthodox church of Hagia Sophia converted into an impressive mosque, all sought to leave their mark on Istanbul and Islamic culture by sponsoring ambitious building programs and the work of scholars, poets, and artists.

The sources in this section provide insights into the personalities and policies of three of the most renowned Islamic rulers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — Suleiman I, Jahangir, and Abbas I. They allow us to analyze their styles of leadership and the strengths and weaknesses of their regimes.

A European Diplomat's Impressions of Suleiman I



21 ▼ *Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, *TURKISH LETTERS*

Suleiman I, known to Europeans as *Suleiman the Magnificent*, is remembered largely for his military conquests, but his accomplishments go beyond battlefield exploits. He was a patron of history and literature, oversaw the codification of Ottoman law (hence his honorific title *the Lawgiver*), and contributed to the architectural grandeur of Istanbul. He was one of the outstanding rulers of the age.

The following description and analysis of Suleiman and his reign was written by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522–1590), a Flemish nobleman who spent most of his life in the service of the Hapsburgs, in particular Ferdinand I, the archduke of Austria, king of Hungary and Bohemia, and, from 1558 to 1564, Holy Roman Emperor. In 1555 Ferdinand sent Busbecq to Suleiman's court in Istanbul to represent his interests in a dispute over Transylvania, a region that had been part of Hungary and today is in Romania. After six years of discussions, the two sides agreed on a compromise by which Transylvania became an autonomous state in theory but paid an annual tribute to the sultan.

During his six years in Ottoman lands Busbecq recorded his observations and impressions and sent them in the form of four long letters to a friend and fellow diplomat, Nicholas Michault. All four letters were published in Paris in 1589. Subsequently appearing in numerous Latin versions and translated into the major European languages, Busbecq's letters provide a wealth of information about Ottoman society.

The following excerpt begins with a description of Busbecq's first meeting with Suleiman I in 1555. It then goes on to comment on the Ottoman military. It concludes with a summary of the events surrounding the murder of Suleiman's oldest son and most likely successor, Mustafa, in 1553. As Busbecq explains, Mustafa's interests clashed with the ambitions of Roxelana, Suleiman's Russian-born wife and the mother of two sons and a daughter by Suleiman. To ensure that her elder son, Selim, would become sultan after Suleiman's death, she convinced her aging husband that Mustafa was plotting against him and that he and his son must be killed. With power passing on to one of the ruler's sons, but not necessarily the eldest, such incidents were not uncommon in all three Islamic empires.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Busbecq's first meeting with Suleiman reveal about the sultan's attitudes toward Europeans? What further insights into his attitudes are provided later in the excerpt?
2. What does Busbecq see as the main difference between Ottoman and European attitudes toward social privilege and inherited status? How do these attitudes affect Ottoman government?
3. What insights do Busbecq's observations provide about the sources of Ottoman military power?
4. What does the episode of Mustafa's assassination reveal about the power and influence of Roxelana? About Ottoman attitudes toward the imperial succession? About Suleiman's character?
5. What advantages and disadvantages were there in the Ottoman practice of not making the eldest son the automatic heir of the reigning sultan?
6. Shortly after Suleiman's reign the Ottoman Empire began to decline. What in Busbecq's account points to future problems for the Ottoman state?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

On our arrival . . . we were taken to call on Achmet Pasha (the chief Vizier) and the other pashas¹ — for the Sultan himself was not then

in the town — and commenced our negotiations with them touching the business entrusted to us by King Ferdinand. The pashas . . . told us that the whole matter depended on the Sultan's pleasure. On his arrival we were admitted to an

¹*Pasha* was an honorary title for a high-ranking military or government official; the *grand vizier* was the sultan's chief advisor and head of the Ottoman administration.

audience; but the manner and spirit in which he . . . listened to our address, our arguments, and our message was by no means favorable. . . .

On entering we were separately conducted into the royal presence by the chamberlains, who grasped our arms. . . . After having gone through a pretense of kissing his [Suleiman's] hand, we were conducted backwards to the wall opposite his seat, care being taken that we should never turn our backs on him. The Sultan then listened to what I had to say; but the language I used was not at all to his taste, for the demands of his Majesty² breathed a spirit of independence and dignity, which was by no means acceptable to one who deemed that his wish was law; and so he made no answer beyond saying in an impatient way, "Giusel, giusel," i.e. well, well. After this we were dismissed to our quartets.

The Sultan's hall was crowded with people, among whom were several officers of high rank. Besides these there were all the troopers of the Imperial guard, and a large force of Janissaries,³ but there was not in all that great assembly a single man who owed his position to anything save his valor and his merit. No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the respect to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. There is no fighting for precedence; a man's place is marked out by the duties he discharges. . . . It is by merit that men rise in the service, a system which ensures that posts should only be assigned to the competent. . . . Those who receive the highest offices from the Sultan are for the most part the sons of shepherds or herdsmen, and so far from being ashamed of their parentage, they actually glory in it, and consider it a matter of boasting that they owe nothing to the accident of birth; for they do not believe that high qualities are either natural or hereditary, nor do they think that they can be handed down from father to son, but that they are partly the gift of God, and partly

the result of good training, great industry, and unwearied zeal. . . . Among the Turks, therefore, honors, high posts, and judgeships are the rewards of great ability and good service.

OTTOMAN MILITARY STRENGTH

Against us stands Suleiman, that foe whom his own and his ancestors' exploits have made so terrible; he tramples the soil of Hungary with 200,000 horses, he is at the very gates of Austria, threatens the rest of Germany, and brings in his train all the nations that extend from our borders to those of Persia. The army he leads is equipped with the wealth of many kingdoms. Of the three regions, into which the world is divided,⁴ there is not one that does not contribute its share towards our destruction. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

The Turkish monarch going to war takes with him over 40,000 camels and nearly as many baggage mules, of which a great part, when he is invading Persia, are loaded with rice and other kinds of grain. These mules and camels also serve to carry tents and armor, and likewise tools and munitions for the campaign. The territories, which bear the name of Persia, . . . are less fertile than our country, and even such crops as they bear are laid waste by the inhabitants in time of invasion in hopes of starving out the enemy, so that it is very dangerous for an army to invade Persia if it is not furnished with abundant supplies. . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

After dinner I practice the Turkish bow, in the use of which weapon people here are marvelously expert. From the eighth, or even the seventh, year of their age they begin to shoot at a mark, and practice archery ten or twelve years. This constant exercise strengthens the muscles of their

²Archduke Ferdinand, Busbecq's employer.

³An elite military force in the service of the sultan. Its ranks were filled originally by young Christian boys who were converted to Islam and given over to military training. They

lived by a strict code of absolute obedience, austerity, religious observance, celibacy, and confinement to barracks.

⁴Asia, Europe, and Africa.

arms, and gives them such skill that they can hit the smallest marks with their arrows. . . . So sure is their aim that in battle they can hit a man in the eye or in any other exposed part they choose.

▼ ▼ ▼

No nation in the world has shown greater readiness than the Turks to avail themselves of the useful inventions of foreigners, as is proved by their employment of cannons and mortars, and many other things invented by Christians. . . . The Turks are much afraid of carbines and pistols, such as are used on horseback. The same, I hear, is the case with the Persians, on which account someone advised Rustem,⁵ when he was setting out with the Sultan on a campaign against them, to raise from his household servants a troop of 200 horsemen and arm them with firearms, as they would cause much alarm . . . in the ranks of the enemy. Rustem, in accordance with this advice, raised a troop of dragoons,⁶ furnished them with firearms, and had them drilled. But they had not completed half the journey when their guns began to get out of order. Every day some essential part of their weapons was lost or broken, and it was not often that armorers could be found capable of repairing them. So, a large part of the firearms having been rendered unserviceable, the men took a dislike to the weapon; and this prejudice was increased by the dirt which its use entailed, the Turks being a very cleanly people; for the dragoons had their hands and clothes begrimed with gunpowder, and moreover presented such a sorry appearance, with their ugly boxes and pouches hanging about them, that their comrades laughed at them and called them apothecaries. So, . . . they gathered around Rustem and showing him their broken and useless firearms, asked what advantage he hoped to gain from them when they met the enemy, and demanded that he should relieve them of them, and give them their old arms again. Rustem, af-

ter considering their request carefully, thought there was no reason for refusing to comply with it, and so they got permission to resume their bows and arrows.

PROBLEMS OF THE SUCCESSION

Suleiman had a son by a concubine who came from the Crimea. . . . His name was Mustafa, and at the time of which I am speaking he was young, vigorous, and of high repute as a soldier. But Suleiman had also several other children, by a Russian woman.⁷ . . . To the latter he was so much attached that he placed her in the position of wife, and assigned her a dowry. . . .

Mustafa's high qualities and matured years marked him out to the soldiers who loved him, and the people who supported him, as the successor of his father, who was now in the decline of life. On the other hand, his step-mother [Roxelana], by throwing the claim of a lawful wife onto the balance, was doing her utmost to counterbalance his personal merits and his rights as eldest son, with a view to obtaining the throne for her own children. In this intrigue, she received the advice and assistance of Rustem, whose fortunes were inseparably linked with hers by his marriage with a daughter she had had by Suleiman. . . .

Inasmuch as Rustem was chief Vizier, . . . he had no difficulty . . . in influencing his master's mind. The Turks, accordingly, are convinced that it was by the calumnies of Rustem and the spells of Roxelana, who was in ill repute as a practitioner of sorcery, that the Sultan was so estranged from his son as to entertain the design of getting rid of him. A few believe that Mustafa, being aware of the plans, . . . decided to anticipate them, and thus engaged in designs against his father's throne and person. The sons of Turkish Sultans are in the most wretched position in the world, for, as soon as one of them succeeds his

⁵Pasha Rustem, the grand vizier, was also Suleiman's son-in-law. He married the daughter of Suleiman and Roxelana, originally a Russian slave girl in the sultan's harem.

⁶Heavily armed mounted troops.

⁷The reference is to Roxelana.

father, the rest are doomed to certain death. The Turk can endure no rival to the throne, and, indeed, the conduct of the Janissaries renders it impossible for the new Sultan to spare his brothers; for if one of them survives, the Janissaries are forever asking generous favors. If these are refused, the cry is heard, "Long live the brother!" "God preserve the brother!" — a tolerably broad hint that they intend to place him on the throne. So that the Turkish Sultans are compelled to celebrate their succession by staining their hands with the blood of their nearest relatives. . . .

Being at war with Shah Tahmasp, Shah of the Persians, he [Suleiman] had sent Rustem against him as a commander-in-chief of his armies. Just as he was about to enter Persian territory, Rustem suddenly halted, and hurried off dispatches to Suleiman, informing him that affairs were in a very critical state; that treason was rife; . . . that the soldiers had been tampered with, and cared for no one but Mustafa; . . . and he must come at once if he wished to preserve his throne. Suleiman was seriously alarmed by these dispatches. He immediately hurried to the army, sent a letter to summon Mustafa to his presence, inviting him to clear himself of those crimes of which he was suspected. . . .

There was great uneasiness among the soldiers, when Mustafa arrived. . . . He was brought to his father's tent, and there everything betokened peace. . . . But there were in the tent certain mutes — . . . strong and sturdy fellows, who had been appointed as his executioners. As soon as he entered the inner tent, they threw themselves upon him, and endeavored to put the fatal noose around his neck. Mustafa, being a man of considerable strength, made a stout defense and fought — there being no doubt that if he escaped . . . and threw himself among the Janissaries, the news of this outrage on their beloved prince would cause such pity and indignation, that they

would not only protect him, but also proclaim him Sultan. Suleiman felt how critical the matter was, being only separated by the linen hangings of his tent from the stage on which this tragedy was being enacted. When he found that there was an unexpected delay in the execution of his scheme, he thrust out his head from the chamber of his tent, and glared on the mutes with fierce and threatening eyes; at the same time, with signs full of hideous meaning, he sternly rebuked their slackness. Hereon the mutes, gaining fresh strength from the terror he inspired, threw Mustafa down, got the bowstring round his neck, and strangled him. Shortly afterwards they laid his body on a rug in front of the tent, that the Janissaries might see the man they had desired as their Sultan. . . .

Meanwhile, Roxelana, not content with removing Mustafa from her path, . . . did not consider that she and her children were free from danger, so long as his offspring survived. Some pretext, however, she thought necessary, in order to furnish a reason for the murder, but this was not hard to find. Information was brought to Suleiman that, whenever his grandson appeared in public, the boys of Ghemlik⁸ — where he was being educated — shouted out, "God save the Prince, and may he long survive his father;" and that the meaning of these cries was to point him out as his grandsire's future successor, and his father's avenger. Moreover, he was bidden to remember that the Janissaries would be sure to support the son of Mustafa, so that the father's death had in no way secured the peace of the throne and realm. . . .

Suleiman was easily convinced by these arguments to sign the death-warrant of his grandson. He commissioned Ibrahim Pasha to go to the Ghemlik with all speed, and put the innocent child to death.⁹

⁸A town in northwest Turkey.

⁹The assassination was carried out by a eunuch hired by Ibrahim Pasha, who had succeeded Rustem Pasha as grand vizier.

A Carmelite Friar's View of Shah Abbas I



22 ▼ *Father Paul Simon, REPORT TO POPE PAUL V*

When Shah Abbas I ascended the Safavid throne in 1587 after the forced abdication of his father, he inherited an empire on the brink of disintegration. He faced a rebellion from Turkoman tribal leaders and invasions by the Ottomans from the west and the Uzbeks from the east. Within fifteen years he crushed the rebels and routed the Uzbeks and Ottomans. Subsequently, Abbas defeated the Mughals in 1621, taking Kandahar, seized the Persian Gulf island of Bahrain in 1622, and in the same year with English help expelled the Portuguese from their trading post at Ormuz. In addition to his military exploits, Abbas encouraged foreign and domestic trade, lent his support to manufacturing enterprises, and presided over a glorious era in Persian culture.

Part of Abbas's strategy to make Persia strong and prosperous was the cultivation of useful contacts with foreigners, especially Europeans. Two English brothers, Anthony and Robert Sherley, helped the shah enlarge and modernize his army and used their contacts to increase Persian trade with the English and Dutch. Abbas also sought alliances with European states against his enemy, the Ottomans. To that end he sent two embassies to Europe in 1599 and 1608 and tolerated the activities of Catholic missionaries, who were encouraged to think he might convert.

Such was the background for the negotiations between the envoys of Abbas I and Pope Clement VIII in 1600 that led to the dispatch of three Carmelite friars to Isfahan in 1604 to explore opportunities for missionary work. After an arduous journey through Russia and Poland, the three friars reached Isfahan in 1605 and remained in Persia six months. One of three, Father Paul Simon of Jesus Mary (1576–1643), a Genoese who became a Carmelite in 1595, traveled extensively during his visit. After a hair-raising return journey on foot through Ottoman territory, Father Simon presented a detailed report on Persia to the new pope, Paul V. Paul then dispatched Father Simon to Spain to discuss with King Philip III the complaints of Abbas I concerning the activities of Portuguese merchants in Ormuz, an important port city in the shah's territory, which the Portuguese (now subjects of the King of Spain) had controlled since 1507. Until his death in 1643 he held a number of administrative posts within his order. His report to Paul V remained in the Vatican archives until it was found and translated into English by a historian of the Carmelites.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What sort of impression does Abbas attempt to make on his subjects? What strategies does he use to make this impression?
2. What methods has Abbas used to suppress the powerful descendants of the Kizilbash who helped Ismail I (r. 1501–1524) establish the Safavid state (referred to by Father Simon as "the old nobles of Persia")?

3. What impresses Father Simon about Abbas's army? How do his comments and observations resemble Busbecq's characterization of Suleiman's troops (source 21)?
4. On the basis of Father Simon's account, what conclusions can be drawn about Abbas's religious views?
5. What factors seem to have shaped Abbas's policies toward the European Christians?
6. Despite the impressive strength of Persia under Abbas, the Persian state quickly declined after his death. What underlying weaknesses do you see in the Persian state during Abbas's rule?

PERSONALITY AND POLICIES

The king . . . is sturdy and healthy, accustomed to much exercise and toil: many times he goes about on foot, and recently he had been forty days on pilgrimage, which he made on foot the whole time. He has extraordinary strength, and with his scimitar¹ can cut a man in two and a sheep with its wool on at a single blow — and the Persian sheep are of large size. . . . In his food he is frugal, as also in his dress, and this to set an example to his subjects; and so in public he eats little else than rice, and that cooked in water only. His usual dress is of linen, and very plain: similarly the nobles and others in his realm follow suit, whereas formerly they used to go out dressed in brocade with jewels and other fopperies: and if he sees anyone who is overdressed, he takes him to task, especially if it be a soldier. But in private he eats what he likes.

He is sagacious in mind, likes fame and to be esteemed: he is courteous in dealing with everyone and at the same time very serious. For he will go through the public streets, eat from what they are selling there and other things, speak at ease freely with the lower classes, cause his subjects to remain sitting while he himself is standing, or will sit down beside this man and that. He says that is how to be a king, and that the king of Spain and other Christians do not get any pleasure out of ruling, because they are

obliged to comport themselves with so much pomp and majesty. . . .

He is very strict in executing justice and pays no regard to his own favorites in this respect; but rather is the stricter with them in order to serve an example for others. So he has no private friends, nor anyone who has influence with him. . . . While we were at Court, he caused the bellies of two of his favorites to be ripped open, because they behaved improperly to an ordinary woman. . . .

He is very speedy in dispatching business: when he gives audience, which he does at the gate of his palace, . . . he finishes off all the cases that are brought to him. The parties stand present before him, the officers of justice and his own council, with whom he consults when it pleases him. The sentence which he gives is final and is immediately executed. If the guilty party deserves death, they kill him at once: to this end, when he gives audience, twelve men and twelve dogs who devour men alive, are kept ready: he keeps them in order to use the greater severity. Apart from the officials, once the sentence is given, it is not permitted to anyone to make any reply: for the person is at once driven off with blows of the sticks of some 30 to 40 royal guards, who stand ready to do this. When he wants to stop giving audience, he causes it to be proclaimed that no one, on pain of death, may bring him petitions, and, when he wants to go

¹A curved steel saber.

out of doors unaccompanied, that no one should follow him. . . .

There are four councilors of the king — Allah Virdi Khan, his general; 'Ata Baig his vizier; the Qurchi Bashi; and one who was his "governor" and preceptor. The three last are always with the Shah, and when he gives audience are standing next to him. He has to be obeyed absolutely: anyone failing in the slightest will pay for it with his head. And so he has had most of the old nobles of Persia killed off and put in their stead low-bred persons whom he has aggrandized. In the whole of Persia there are only two of the old-time governors. . . . Because of the great obedience they pay him, when he wills to have one of the nobles killed, he dispatches one of his men to fetch the noble's head: the man goes off to the grandee, and says to him: "The Shah wants your head." The noble replies: "Very well," and lets himself be decapitated — otherwise he would lose it and, with it, all his family would become extinct. But, when they [the nobles] allow themselves to be decapitated, he aggrandizes the children.

The Shah of Persia is very rich, because, besides having the treasure of his predecessors, he has seized those of the princes of Lar and of Gilan,² who were powerful and rich princes, and others. He has many sources of income and is master over the property of his subjects. . . .

MILITARY STRENGTH

He is very valiant and has a great liking for warfare and weapons of war, which he has constantly in his hands: we have been eye-witnesses of this because, whenever we were with him, he was adjusting scimitars, testing arquebuses,³ etc.: and to make him a present that will give him pleasure is to give him some good pieces of arms. This is the great experience which he has obtained of warfare over so many years, that he

makes it in person and from the first it has made him a fine soldier and very skilled, and his men so dexterous that they are little behind our men in Europe. He has introduced into his militia the use of and esteem for arquebuses and muskets, in which they are very practiced. Therefore it is that his realm has been so much extended on all sides. . . .

His militia is divided into three kinds of troops: one of the Georgians,⁴ who will be about 25,000 and are mounted; . . . this is the old-time militia of the kings of Persia for the guarding of their persons. The present king has introduced the second force, which is made up of slaves of various races, many of them Christian renegades; their number will be as many again, and they are more esteemed than the first cited, both because they are servants of the king, and he assigns posts to them and promotes them. . . . The third body consists of soldiers whom the great governors of Persia are obliged to maintain and pay the whole year; they will be about 50,000. . . . When they [the governors] accomplish something signal in war, he gives them a governorship which produces greater revenue and sometimes the territory they capture is left to them. All the above-mentioned soldiers, who will total some 100,000, receive pay for the whole year. Then, according to the campaign and enterprise the king wishes to undertake, he enlists others, and, when it is necessary to make a great effort, he has it proclaimed throughout his country that whosoever is his well-wisher should follow him. Then everyone takes up arms.

THE SHAH'S FAMILY

The Shah has three sons: the eldest aged 22 years; . . . His mother was a Christian, and he is friendly toward Christians and not so quick-tempered as his father. The second son, 12 years old, has a temperament similar to that of his father. The

²Lar was a Persian province on the Persian Gulf; Gilan was a province in northwest Persia.

³A portable matchlock gun invented in the fifteenth century and usually fired from a support.

⁴A Christian people inhabiting a region between the Caspian and Black seas.

third is aged 5 or 6. He has several daughters. His predecessors were wont to kill off their daughters because there were no neighboring monarchs of equal rank to whom to marry them, and they did not like giving them in marriage to nobles of the country, for fear of the latter rebelling. In order to eliminate such cruel procedure this present Shah marries them to men of lowly position, as he did when we were there, giving one daughter to a camp commandant, the other to a captain. The eldest son born to the Shah inherits the throne even though he be by a slave woman.

HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Regarding the religion of the king I think that no one knows what he believes: he does not observe the Muslim law in many things, nor is he a Christian. Six or seven years ago he displayed many signs of not being averse to our Faith. . . .

It is true that when the Augustinian Fathers⁵ went to Persia the king showed himself extraordinarily affectionate with them, and gave many signs of being well disposed toward the Christian Faith and of wanting to embrace it. . . . In notifying the king the objects of their mission, the Augustinian Fathers told him that they came to show him the True Faith, and to baptize him. He answered that he would discuss that at more length when he had the opportunity. Almost always he kept them near him. . . . He gave them 2,000 scudi⁶ yearly for their subsistence, and entertained them several times at banquets, always making them sit near him, and he took one of them into the harem of his women, which was an exceptional mark of favor, since he did not even allow his own son to enter it; he made some of them [the women] dance. When the Fathers proposed to him [that he should adopt] our Faith, he made show to agree to everything. He gave them, sealed with his small seal, and also by the

prince his son and three of his councilors who alone were present at this, a writing in which he promised to construct a church with bells in every town he should capture from the Turks, to allow the Gospel to be preached, if the King of Spain kept to that which he promised him by the same Fathers, i.e. to take up arms against the Turks, and to send him artillery and engineers, which up till now has not been fulfilled. As evidence that he still had the mind to fulfil what he was promising, he said that on the following day he would go to their church — as in fact he did. . . . [We were] told that the king wanted to make a great bell and a church for the Fathers in Isfahan, asked the Fathers for relics and a piece of the wood of the Cross, and that they gave it to him. . . .

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- ▷ By the time Father Simon arrived in Persia in 1607, Abbas's views of European Christians, especially the Portuguese Augustinians, had changed. As Father Simon states, this change was caused by two things: the efforts of the Augustinians to turn the shah's newly conquered Armenian Christian subjects into Roman Catholics and the failure of the King of Spain, who at this point also ruled Portugal, to attack the Ottoman Empire.
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In Tabriz it was told the king that the Augustinian Fathers had put up a bell in their church in Isfahan and that for this reason there were many people sick in that town. The Shah bit his finger, muttering two or three times: "Church with a bell! church with a bell!"; and gave orders that they should immediately take it down, as they did. In many other actions he demonstrated the small goodwill he had for Christians; and this increased to such an extent that, when we arrived in the city of Isfahan, he had given instructions for publication of an edict to the effect that all 'Frankish'⁷ Christians and

⁵Members of the Augustinian religious order, which traces its spiritual lineage to St. Augustine (354–430). The Augustinians in question were Portuguese.

⁶A gold or silver coin minted in Italy.

the Augustinian Fathers should quit his realm. . . .

. . . The cause of so great a change . . . God alone knows; the Augustinian Fathers say that in the beginning the king was merely pretending and that those demonstrations of affection and goodwill did not come from his heart. Other people attribute it to the many causes for annoyance the officials of his Catholic Majesty in Ormuz⁸ have given him; to the Christian princes, His Holiness, the Emperor, the king of Spain not having kept the word they had given to various ambassadors that they would make war on the Turks, when they exhorted him himself to do the same, as he in fact has done; to many of the Franks, who had gone to his country, having committed a great many follies; and, more recently still, to the Emperor having agreed to a treaty⁹ of peace between himself and the Turks, without giving him notice. . . . Certain it is that the mullahs¹⁰ — this the name they give in their tongue to the learned men of their belief — went to the Shah, and told him to reflect on what he was doing — that he knew very well that the [Ottoman] Sultan was the head of the Muslim belief; if he should bring about the destruction of the latter in this warfare, the Christians would do the same to him, and to all of their belief. For they observed what poor sort of friends they were, when even their kings did not keep their word to him, while, the Franks who came to his country, what scant respect they paid him. It would be better to make peace with the Turkish Sul-

tan, and then both of them together to attack the Christians. . . .

[All this left Father Simon at a loss about Abbas's true religious convictions.] . . . In his seraglio he has many Christian Armenian, Georgian, and Circassian woman.¹¹ I think that he lets them live as they wish, because when I enquired what the Shah did with so many holy pictures that were presented to him as gifts and some relics of the Saints, for which he asked, the answer was that he used to give them to the women in his seraglio. Besides that he is well informed regarding the mysteries of our holy Faith and discourses on the mystery of the most holy Trinity: he knows many examples and allusions which the Saints give in order to prove it, and discourses about the other mysteries . . . if he does not discourse about the women in his seraglio or about some demon or other. On account of the many disappointments which he asserts the Christians have caused him all this fervor has cooled. With all that he does not detest them, for he converses and eats with them, he suffers us to say frankly what we believe about our Faith and his own: sometimes he asks us about this. To us he has given a house: he knows that we say Mass publicly, he allows whoever may wish among the Persians to come to it, and we can teach them freely regarding our holy Faith, whenever they make inquiries about it. . . . Till now none of them has been converted: I think they are waiting for one of the nobles or of their mullahs to break the ice. . . .

⁷"Frankish" was a term for European.

⁸Ormuz, a port city on the Persian Gulf, had been taken by the Portuguese in 1507; between 1580 and 1640 Portugal was ruled by the king of Spain.

⁹The reference is to the Treaty of Sitvatorok, signed on November 11, 1606.

¹⁰A Muslim religious leader trained in law and doctrine.

¹¹Like the Georgians, the Circassians were a Christian people living between the Caspian and Black seas.

A Self-Portrait of Jahangir



23 ▼ *Jahangir, MEMOIRS*

Jahangir, Mughal emperor from 1605 to 1627, modestly increased the size of the empire through conquest, snuffed out a half dozen rebellions, and on the whole continued the policies of his illustrious father, Akbar (r. 1556–1605). The lands he ruled provided him the wealth to indulge his tastes for formal gardens, entertaining, ceremony, sports, literature, and finely crafted books. In addition to subsidizing the work of hundreds of painters and writers, Jahangir himself contributed to the literature of his age by writing a memoir. Intended to glorify himself and instruct his heirs, it covered the first thirteen years of his reign, before his addiction to alcohol and opium sapped his energy and effectiveness.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Other than to glorify the person of the emperor, what political purposes might have been served by Jahangir's elaborate coronation ceremony?
2. What do the "twelve special regulations" issued at the beginning of Jahangir's reign reveal about his priorities as emperor?
3. How does Jahangir view his Hindu subjects? What are his reasons for allowing them to practice their religion?
4. What does the episode of the Afghan bandits reveal about Jahangir's view of the emperor's responsibilities?
5. What similarities and differences do you see in the authority and leadership style of Suleiman I, Abbas I (sources 21 and 22), and Jahangir?

JAHANGIR'S CORONATION

On the eighth of the latter month of Jammaudy, of the year of the Hegira one thousand and fourteen,¹ in the metropolis of Agrah, and in the forenoon of the day, being then at the age of thirty-eight, I became Emperor, and under the most felicitous auspices, took my seat on the throne of my wishes. . . . As at the very instant that I seated myself on the throne the sun rose from the horizon, I accepted this as the omen of victory, and as indicating a reign of unvarying prosperity. Hence I assumed the titles of Jahangir

Padshah, and Jahangir Shah: the world-subduing emperor; the world-subduing king. I ordained that the following legend should be stamped on the coinage of the empire: "Stricken at Agrah by that . . . safeguard of the world; the sovereign splendor of the faith, Jahangir, son of the imperial Akbar."

On this occasion I made use of the throne prepared by my father, and enriched at an expense without parallel, for the celebration of the festival of the new year. . . . In the fabrication of the throne a sum not far short of ten kroures of ashrefies² was expended in jewels alone. . . .

¹October 10, 1605. Jahangir uses the Muslim calendar, dated from the Hegira, Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina.

²A *kroure* is a measurement of weight, and an *ashrefy* is a unit of money. Although it is impossible to determine the exact value of ten "kroures of ashrefies," it is an enormous sum.

. . . The legs and body of the throne were at the same time loaded with fifty maunds of ambergris,³ so that wherever it might be found expedient to put it together, no further perfumes were necessary for an assemblage of whatever magnitude.

Having thus seated myself on the throne of my expectation and wishes, I caused also the imperial crown, which my father had caused to be made after the manner of that which was worn by the great kings of Persia, to be brought before me, and then, in the presence of the whole assembled Emirs,⁴ having placed it on my brows, as an omen auspicious to the stability and happiness of my reign, kept it there for the space of a full . . . hour. On each of the twelve points of this crown was a single diamond . . . the whole purchased by my father with the resources of his own government, not from anything accruing to him by inheritance from his predecessors. At the point in the center of the top part of the crown was a single pearl . . . and on different parts of the same were set altogether two hundred rubies. . . .

For forty days and forty nights I caused the . . . great imperial state drum to strike up, without ceasing, the strains of joy and triumph; and . . . around my throne, the ground was spread by my directions with the most costly brocades and gold embroidered carpets. Censers⁵ of gold and silver were disposed in different directions for the purpose of burning fragrant drugs, and nearly three thousand camphorated wax lights, . . . in branches of gold and silver perfumed with ambergris, illuminated the scene from night till morning. Numbers of blooming youth, . . . clad in dresses of the most costly materials, woven in

silk and gold, with . . . amulets sparkling with the lustre of the diamond, the emerald, the sapphire, and the ruby, awaited my commands, rank after rank, and in attitude most respectful. And finally, the Emirs of the empire, . . . stood round in brilliant array, also waiting for the commands of their sovereign. . . .

THE EMPEROR'S DECREES

The very first ordinance that issued from me . . . related to the chain of justice, one end of which I caused to be fastened to the battlements of the royal tower of the castle of Agrah, and the other to a stone post near the bed of the river Jumnah; to the end that whenever those charged with administering the courts were slack in dispensing justice to the downtrodden, he who had suffered injustice by applying his hand to the chain would find himself in the way of obtaining speedy redress.⁶ . . . I ordered a chain of pure gold, sixty ells⁷ in length, with sixty bells. It weighs four Hindustani maunds.⁸ . . .

I issued twelve special regulations to be implemented and observed in all the realm.

1. I canceled the *tamgha*, the *mirabari*,⁹ and all other imposts the *jagirdars*¹⁰ of every province and district had imposed for their own profit.
2. I ordered that when a district lay wasted by thieves and highway bandits or was destitute of inhabitants, that towns should be built, . . . and every effort made to protect the subjects from injury. I directed the *jagirdars* in such deserted places to erect mosques and caravansaries, or places for the

³A *maund* was a unit of weight, which could vary from as little as 10 pounds to as much as 160; *ambergris*, a waxy substance secreted by sperm whales and found floating in tropical seas, is used as a perfume.

⁴High government officials.

⁵A container for burning incense.

⁶Presumably pulling the chain would be the first step in bringing the perceived injustice to the emperor's attention.

⁷An *ell* was a unit of length, equal to approximately forty-five inches.

⁸A *Hindustani maund* equaled just over ten pounds.

⁹The *tamgha* and *mirabari* were both customs duties.

¹⁰A *jagir* was a grant of land by the emperor that entitled the holder to the income from the land. The income was to be used mainly to finance the maintenance of troops. A *jagirdar* was the holder of a *jagir*.

accommodation of travelers, in order to render the district once more an inhabited country, and that men might again be able to travel back and forth safely. . . .

3. Merchants travelling through the country were not to have their bales or packs opened without their consent.
4. When a person shall die and leave children, whether he is an infidel¹¹ or Muslim, no man was to interfere a pin's point in his property; but when he has no children or direct and unquestionable heirs his inheritance is to be spent on approved expenditures such as construction of mosques and caravansaries, repair of bridges, and the creation of watertanks and wells.
5. No person was permitted either to make or to sell wine or any other intoxicating liquor. I undertook to institute this regulation, although it is sufficiently well known that I myself have the strongest inclination for wine, in which from the age of sixteen I have liberally indulged. . . .
6. No official was permitted to take up his abode in the house of any subject of my realm. On the contrary, when individuals serving in the state armies come to any town, and can rent a place to live, it would be commendable; otherwise they were to pitch their tents outside the town and prepare abodes for themselves.
7. No person was to suffer, for any offence, the cutting off of a nose or ear. For theft, the offender was to be scourged with thorns, or deterred from further transgressions by an oath on the Qur'an.
8. I decreed that superintendents of royal lands and jagirdars were prohibited from seizing the lands of their subjects or cultivating the lands themselves for their own benefit; neither was any jagirdar to exercise any authority beyond the limits of his own. . . .

On the contrary, his attention was to be wholly and exclusively devoted to the cultivation and improvement of the district allotted to him.

9. The tax collectors of royal lands and jagirdars may not intermarry with the people of the districts in which they reside without my permission.¹²
 10. Governors in all the large cities were directed to establish infirmaries and hospitals with physicians appointed to treat the sick. Expenses are to be covered by income from royal lands.
 11. During the month of my birth there could be no slaughter of animals in my realm. . . . In every week also, on Thursday, that being the day of my accession, and Sunday, my father's birthday, . . . and also because it is the day attributed to the sun and the day on which the creation of the world was begun. It was unjustifiable to deprive any animal of life on such a day.
 12. I issued a decree confirming the dignitaries and jagirs of my father's government in all that they had enjoyed while he was living; and where I found sufficient merit, I conferred an advance of rank in various gradations. . . .
- I told Miran Sadr-i-Jahan, who is one of the *sayyids*¹³ of true lineage in Hundustan and long held the glorious post of comptroller for my father, that every day the deserving poor should be brought before me. I set free . . . all criminals who had long been imprisoned in fortresses and jails.

POLICY TOWARD THE HINDUS

I am here led to relate that at the city of Banaras¹⁴ a temple had been erected [in which] . . . the principal idol . . . had on its head a tiara or cap, enriched with jewels. . . . [Also] placed in this

¹¹A Hindu.

¹²This was to prevent any tax collector or jagirdar from gaining a vested interest in the fortunes of a particular region or family.

¹³A *sayyid* is considered to be a lineal descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁴A city on the Ganges River.

temple, moreover, as the associates and ministering servants of the principal idol, [were] four other images of solid gold, each crowned with a tiara, in the like manner enriched with precious stones. It was the belief of these non-believers that a dead Hindu, provided when alive he had been a worshiper, when laid before this idol would be restored to life. As I could not possibly give credit to such a pretense, I employed a confidential person to ascertain the truth; and, as I justly supposed, the whole was detected to be an impudent fraud. . . .

On this subject I must however acknowledge, that having on one occasion asked my father the reason why he had forbidden anyone to prevent or interfere with the building of these haunts of idolatry, his reply was in the following terms: "My dear child," said he, "I find myself a powerful monarch, the shadow of God upon earth. I have seen that he bestows the blessing of his gracious providence upon all his creatures without distinction. . . . With all of the human race, with all of God's creatures, I am at peace: why then should I permit myself, under any consideration, to be the cause of molestation or aggression to any one? Besides, are not five parts in six . . . either Hindus or aliens to the faith; and were I to be governed by motives of the kind suggested in your inquiry, what alternative can I have but to put them all to death! I have thought it therefore my wisest plan to let these men alone. Neither is it to be forgotten, that the class of whom we are speaking . . . are usefully engaged, either in the pursuits of science or the arts, or of improvements for the benefit of mankind, and have in numerous instances arrived at the highest distinctions in the state, there being, indeed, to be found in this city men of every description, and of every religion on the face of the earth." . . .

▼ ▼ ▼

In the practice of being burnt on the funeral pyre of their husbands¹⁵ as sometimes exhibited

¹⁵A woman who burned herself in this way was known as *sati* (Sanskrit for "virtuous woman"). The word *sati* also is used to describe the burning itself.

among the widows of the Hindus, I had previously directed that no woman who was the mother of children should be thus made a sacrifice, however willing to die; and I now further ordained, that in no case was the practice to be permitted, when compulsion was in the slightest degree employed, whatever might be the opinions of the people. In other respects they were in no way to be molested in the duties of their religion, nor exposed to oppression or violence in any manner whatever. . . .

THE DUTIES OF THE EMPEROR

. . . It had been made known to me that the roads about Kandahar¹⁶ were grievously infested by the Afghans, who by their vexatious exactions rendered the communications in that quarter extremely unsafe for travelers of every description. . . .

Lushker Khan . . . was despatched by my orders toward Kabul for the purpose of clearing the roads in that direction, which had been rendered unsafe by the outrages of licentious bandits. It so happened that when this commander had nearly reached the point for which he was destined he found opposed to him a body of mountaineers . . . , who had assembled to the number of forty thousand, horse and foot and musketeers, had shut up the approaches against him, and prevented his further advance. . . . A conflict began, which continued . . . from dawn of day until nearly sunset. The enemy were however finally defeated, with the loss of seventeen thousand killed, a number taken prisoners, and a still greater proportion escaping to their hiding-places among the mountains. The prisoners were conducted to my presence yoked together, with the heads of the seventeen thousand slain in the battle suspended from their necks. After some deliberation as to the destiny of these captives, I resolved that their lives should be

¹⁶A city in Afghanistan.

spared, and that they should be employed in bringing forage for my elephants.

. . . The shedding of so much human blood must ever be extremely painful; but until some other resource is discovered, it is unavoidable. Unhappily the functions of government cannot be carried on without severity, and occasional extinction of human life: for without something of the kind, some species of coercion and chas-

tisement, the world would soon exhibit the horrible spectacle of mankind, like wild beasts, worrying each other to death with no other motive than rapacity and revenge. God is witness that there is no repose for crowned heads. There is no pain or anxiety equal to that which attends the possession of sovereign power, for to the possessor there is not in this world a moment's rest. . . .

Religion and Society in South and Southwest Asia

Although many major religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity — originated in South and Southwest Asia, by the sixteenth century, the region was dominated by two faiths. They were Islam, ascendant everywhere except India, and Hinduism, the Indian subcontinent's ancient religion that endured despite centuries of competition from Buddhism, Jainism, and Islam.

At first glance, one is struck by the many differences between Islam — with its uncompromising monotheism, its reliance on its holy book, the Qur'an, and its origin in the prophecies of a single human being, Muhammad — and Hinduism — with its thousands of gods, its slow and continuous evolution, and its lack of a single creed or holy book. Yet on a deeper level, a fundamental similarity exists in the religions. Both reject any separation between a person's religious and secular life. Islam and Hinduism not only guide each believer's spiritual development but also define that believer's role as a parent, spouse, subject, and man or woman. Secularism as such does not exist in either religious tradition.

Islam originated in the seventh century C.E. and was based on the prophecies of Muhammad (ca. 570–632 C.E.), whose revelations about Allah (Arabic for God) were recorded in Islam's most holy book, the Qur'an. *Islam* in Arabic means "submission," and a Muslim is one who submits to God's will. Islam's basic creed is the statement that every follower must utter daily: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." All Muslims are expected to accept the Qur'an as the word of God, perform works of charity, fast during the holy month of Ramadan, say daily prayers, and, if possible, make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the city on the Arabian peninsula where Muhammad received Allah's revelation. Islam teaches that at death each person will be judged by Allah, with the faithful rewarded by Heaven and the unfaithful damned to an eternity in Hell.

Hinduism, which evolved over many centuries, has no single creed, set of rituals, holy book, or organized church. Unlike Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which affirm the existence of only one God, Hinduism includes many thousands of deities

in its pantheon, although all are believed to be manifestations of the Divine Essence or Absolute Reality, called Brahman. Hindus believe many paths can lead to enlightenment, and Hinduism thus encompasses a wide range of beliefs and rituals.

All Hindus are part of the caste system, a religiously sanctioned order of social relationships that goes back to the beginnings of Indian civilization between 1500 and 1000 B.C.E. A person's caste, into which he or she is born for life, determines social and legal status, restricts marriage partners to other caste members, limits an individual to certain professions, and, in effect, minimizes contacts with members of other castes. The English word *caste* is derived from the Portuguese word *casta*, meaning "pure." Hindus use two different words for caste: *varna* (color) and *jati* (birth). *Varna* refers only to the four most ancient and fundamental social-religious divisions: *Brahmins* (priests and teachers), *Kshatriyas* (warriors, nobles, and rulers), *Vaisyas* (landowners, merchants, and artisans), and *Sudras* (peasants and laborers). Outside the caste system and at the bottom of the Hindu hierarchy are the "untouchables," who are relegated to such despised tasks as gathering manure, sweeping streets, and butchering animals. Each of the four major castes is further divided into *jatis*, local hereditary occupational groups that during the 1500s and 1600s numbered around three thousand.

The caste system is related to belief in the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation. This is the belief that each individual soul, or *atman*, a dislocated piece of the Universal Soul, or Brahman, strives through successive births to reunite with Brahman and win release from the chains of material existence and the cycle of death and rebirth. Reincarnation is based on one's *karma*, the fruit of one's actions, or the soul's destiny, which is decided by how well or poorly a person has conformed to *dharmā*, a Hindu concept connected with the caste system. *Dharma* is the duty to be performed by members of each *jati* and *varna*. If a person fulfills his or her *dharmā*, in the next incarnation he or she will move up the cosmic ladder, closer to ultimate reunion with the One.

Sunni versus Shi'ite in the Early Sixteenth Century



24 ▼ *Sultan Selim I,* *LETTER TO SHAH ISMAIL OF PERSIA*

The following letter, written by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520) to the founder of the Persian Safavid Empire, Ismail I (r. 1501–1524), is an example of the enduring bitterness between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims. Selim, who in the Ottoman tradition was a Sunni, was deeply disturbed by the emergence of a Shi'ite state in Persia under Ismail. Ismail, believed by his followers to have descended from Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, had many supporters among the Turks of eastern Anatolia and had aided Selim's brother and rival, Ahmed, in the succession conflict following Sultan Bayezid's death in 1512. When Ismail in-

vaded eastern Ottoman territory in 1513, war seemed inevitable. Nonetheless, Selim wrote the following letter to Ismail in early 1514 threatening to destroy him militarily unless he embraced Sunni Islam and relinquished his recent conquests. Ismail did neither, and later in the year, Selim's armies defeated Ismail's forces at the battle of Chaldiran, on the border of the two empires. Despite this loss, Persia remained under Ismail's control and thus committed to Shi'ism. The battle of Chaldiran was only the first act in a long and bitter struggle between the two Islamic empires.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Even though Selim's letter is designed to malign Shi'ism, not define Islam, it contains many references to essential Muslim beliefs. Which ones can you find?
2. What does Selim's letter reveal about the differences between Sunnis and Shi'ites?
3. How does Selim perceive himself within the Islamic world?
4. Selim must have realized that the deeply religious Ismail was unlikely to abandon Shi'ism. Why might he have written the letter, despite the likelihood that its appeal would fall on deaf ears?

The Supreme Being who is at once the sovereign arbiter of the destinies of men and the source of all light and knowledge, declares in the holy book¹ that the true faith is that of the Muslims, and that whoever professes another religion, far from being hearkened to and saved, will on the contrary be cast out among the rejected on the great day of the Last Judgment; He says further, this God of truth, that His designs and decrees are unalterable, that all human acts are perforce reported to Him, and that he who abandons the good way will be condemned to hell-fire and eternal torments. Place yourself, O Prince, among the true believers, those who walk in the path of salvation, and who turn aside with care from vice and infidelity. May the purest and holiest blessings be upon Muhammad, the master of the two worlds, the prince of prophets, as well as upon his descendants and all who follow his Law!

I, sovereign chief of the Ottomans, master of the heroes of the age; . . . I, the exterminator of

idolators, destroyer of the enemies of the true faith, the terror of the tyrants and pharaohs of the age; I, before whom proud and unjust kings have humbled themselves, and whose hand breaks the strongest sceptres; I, the great Sultan-Khan, son of Sultan Bayezid-Khan, son of Sultan Muhammad-Khan, son of Sultan Murad-Khan, I address myself graciously to you, Amir Isma'il, chief of the troops of Persia, comparable in tyranny to Sohak and Afrasiab,² and predestined to perish . . . in order to make known to you that the works emanating from the Almighty are not the fragile products of caprice or folly, but make up an infinity of mysteries impenetrable to the human mind. The Lord Himself says in his holy book: "We have not created the heavens and the earth in order to play a game" [Qur'an, 21:16]. Man, who is the noblest of the creatures and the summary of the marvels of God, is in consequence on earth the living image of the Creator. It is He who has set up Caliphs³ on

¹The Qur'an.

²Legendary kings of central Asia.

³Deputies, or successors, of the Prophet Muhammad who lead the Muslim community on earth.

earth, because, joining faculties of soul with perfection of body, man is the only being who can comprehend the attributes of the divinity and adore its sublime beauties; but he possesses this rare intelligence, he attains this divine knowledge only in our religion and by observing the precepts of the prince of prophets, the Caliph of Caliphs, the right arm of the God of Mercy; it is then only by practicing the true religion that man will prosper in this world and merit eternal life in the other. As to you, Amir Isma'il, such a recompense will not be your lot; because you have denied the sanctity of the divine laws; because you have deserted the path of salvation and the sacred commandments; because you have impaired the purity of the dogmas of Islam; because you have dishonored, soiled, and destroyed the altars of the Lord, usurped the sceptre of the East by unlawful and tyrannical means; because coming forth from the dust, you have raised yourself by odious devices to a place shining with splendor and magnificence; because you have opened to Muslims the gates of tyranny and oppression; because you have joined iniquity, perjury, and blasphemy to your sectarian impiety; because under the cloak of the hypocrite, you have sowed everywhere trouble and sedition; because you have raised the standard of irreligion and heresy; because yielding to the impulse of your evil passions, and giving yourself up without rein to the most infamous disorders, you have dared to throw off the control of Muslim laws and to permit lust and rape, the massacre of the most virtuous and respectable men, the destruction of pulpits and temples, the profanation of tombs, the ill-treatment of the *ulama*, the doctors and amirs⁴ descended from the Prophet, the repudiation of the Qur'an, the cursing of the legitimate Caliphs. Now as the first duty of a Muslim and above all of a pious prince is to obey the commandment, "O, you faithful who believe,

be the executors of the decrees of God!" the *ulama* and our doctors have pronounced sentence of death against you, perjurer and blasphemer, and have imposed on every Muslim the sacred obligation to arm in defense of religion and destroy heresy and impiety in your person and that of all your partisans.

Animated by the spirit of this *fatwa*,⁵ conforming to the Qur'an, the code of divine laws, and wishing on one side to strengthen Islam, on the other to liberate the lands and peoples who writhe under your yoke, we have resolved to lay aside our imperial robes in order to put on the shield and coat of mail, to raise our ever victorious banner, to assemble our invincible armies, to take up the gauntlet of the avenger, to march with our soldiers, whose sword strikes mortal blows, and whose point will pierce the enemy even to the constellation of Sagittarius. In pursuit of this noble resolution, we have entered upon the campaign, and guided by the hand of the Almighty, we hope soon to strike down your tyrannous arm, blow away the clouds of glory and grandeur which trouble your head and cause your fatal blindness, release from your despotism your trembling subjects, smother you in the end in the very mass of flames which your infernal *jinn*⁶ raises everywhere along your passage, accomplishing in this way on you the maxim which says: "He who sows discord can only reap evils and afflictions." However, anxious to conform to the spirit of the law of the Prophet, we come, before commencing war, to set out before you the words of the Qur'an, in place of the sword, and to exhort you to embrace the true faith; this is why we address this letter to you.

We all have a different nature, and the human race resembles mines of gold and silver. Among some, vice is deeply rooted; these are incorrigible, and one could no more draw them to virtue than one could whiten a Negro's skin; among others,

⁴*Ulama* were bodies of religious teachers and interpreters of Muslim law; *doctors* here means teachers; *amirs* were military commanders and princes.

⁵Religious decree.

⁶Supernatural spirit.

vice has not become second nature; they retract their errors when they wish, by a serious return, to mortify their senses and repress their passions. The most efficacious means of remedying evil is to search the conscience deeply, to open one's eyes to faults, and to ask pardon of the God of Mercy with true sorrow and repentance. We urge you to look into yourself, to renounce your errors, and to march towards the good with a firm and courageous step; we ask further that you give up possession of the territory violently seized from our state and to which you have only illegitimate pretensions, that you deliver it back into the hands of our lieutenants and officers; and if

you value your safety and repose, this should be done without delay.

But if, to your misfortune, you persist in your past conduct, puffed up with the idea of your power and your foolish bravado, you wish to pursue the course of your iniquities, you will see in a few days your plains covered with our tents and inundated with our battalions. Then prodigies of valor will be done, and we shall see the decrees of the Almighty, Who is the God of Armies, and sovereign judge of the actions of men, accomplished. For the rest, victory to him who follows the path of salvation!

A Muslim's Description of Hindu Beliefs and Practices



25 ▼ *Abu'l Fazl, AKBARNAMA*

As Akbar, Mughal emperor from 1556 to 1605, extended and strengthened his state, at his side was Abu'l Fazl, his close friend and chief advisor from 1579 until his assassination in 1602. Abu'l Fazl is best known today as the author of the *Akbarnama*, a long laudatory history of Akbar's reign full of information about the emperor's personality and exploits. At the time of Abu'l Fazl's assassination, instigated by the future Emperor Jahangir, his history had covered only the first forty-six years of Akbar's life, but that was enough to ensure his work's standing as one of the masterpieces of Mughal literature.

One reason for the great length of the *Akbarnama* is that in addition to chronicling Akbar's life, it contains numerous descriptions of Indian society such as the passage on Hinduism that follows. Abu'l Fazl, who shared the tolerant religious views of the emperor, was interested in presenting Hinduism favorably to his Islamic readers, many of whom were uncomfortable with the religious freedom Akbar offered his Hindu subjects. Even more disturbing to many Muslims was Akbar's genuine interest not just in Hinduism but also Christianity, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism, religions from which he borrowed to found a new religious cult, *Din Illahi*, or Divine Faith. Abu'l Fazl sought to address concerns of orthodox Muslims that Hindus were guilty of the two greatest sins against the majesty and oneness of God — idolatry (the worship of idols) and polytheism (a belief in many gods). He also explained the religious basis of the Hindu caste system, the rigid hierarchies of which were far removed from the Muslim belief in the equality of all believers before Allah.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does Abu'l Fazl counter the charge that Hindus are polytheists? Do you find his arguments convincing? Why?
2. How does Abu'l Fazl address the charge that Hindus are idol worshipers?
3. In what ways do caste and karma provide Hindus a moral understanding of the universe?
4. What do the dharmas of the castes reveal about Hindu social values?
5. Where do women fit into the structure of the ladder of reincarnation? What does this suggest about their status in Hindu society?
6. Abu'l Fazl is attempting to make Hinduism more acceptable to Muslims, but this does not necessarily invalidate what he writes. If you accept what he says as basically true, what conclusions can you reach about the ways Hindus perceive and relate to Divine Reality?

They one and all believe in the unity of God, and as to the reverence they pay to images of stone and wood and the like, which simpletons regard as idolatry, it is not so. The writer of these has exhaustively discussed the subject with many enlightened and upright men, and it became evident that these images . . . are fashioned as aids to fix the mind and keep the thoughts from wandering, while the worship of God alone is required as indispensable. In all their ceremonial observances and usage they ever implore the favor of the world-illuminating sun and regard the pure essence of the Supreme Being as transcending the idea of power in operation.

Brahma . . . they hold to be the Creator; Vishnu, the Nourisher and Preserver; and Rudra,¹ called also Mahadeva, the Destroyer. Some maintain that God who is without equal, manifested himself under these three divine forms, without thereby sully the garment of His inviolate sanctity, as the Nazarenes hold of the Messiah.² Others assert that these were human creatures exalted to these dignities through perfectness of

worship, probity of thought and righteousness of deed. The godliness and self-discipline of this people is such as is rarely to be found in other lands.

They hold that the world had a beginning, and some are of opinion that it will have an end. . . . They allow of no existence external to God. The world is a delusive appearance, and as a man in sleep sees fanciful shapes, and is affected by a thousand joys and sorrows, so are its seeming realities. . . .

Brahman is the Supreme Being; and is essential existence and wisdom and also bliss. . . .

Since according to their belief, the Supreme Deity can assume an elemental form without defiling the skirt of the robe of omnipotence, they first make various idols of gold and other substances to represent this ideal and gradually withdrawing the mind from this material worship, they become meditatively absorbed in the ocean of His mysterious Being. . . .

They believe that the Supreme Being in the wisdom of His counsel, assumes an elementary form of a special character³ for the good of the

¹Also known as Shiva.

²Abu'l Fazl draws two comparisons here. He compares this Hindu trinity with both the Christian Trinity (three divine and full separate persons in one God) and with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy

Trinity. His Muslim readers would have known basic Christian beliefs.

³That is, the Hindu Supreme Being assumes various bodies. These incarnations are known as *avatars*.

creation, and many of the wisest of the Hindus accept this doctrine. . . .

CASTE

The Hindu philosophers reckon four states of auspiciousness which they term *varna*. 1. *Brahmin*. 2. *Kshatriya*. 3. *Vaisya*. 4. *Sudra*. Other than these are termed *Mlechchha*.⁴ At the creation of the world the first of these classes was produced from the mouth of Brahma, a brief account of whom has already been given: the second, from his arms; the third, from his thigh and the fourth from his feet; the fifth from the cow *Kamadhenu*, the name of *Mlechchha* being employed to designate them.

The *Brahmins* have six recognized duties.

1. The study of the Vedas⁵ and other sciences.
2. The instruction of others (in the sacred texts).
3. The performance of the *Jag*, that is oblation of money and kind to the Devatas.⁶
4. Inciting others to the same.
5. Giving presents.
6. Receiving presents.

Of these six the *Kshatriya* must perform three.

1. Perusing the holy texts.
 2. The performance of the *Jag*.
 3. Giving presents.
- Further they must,
1. Minister to Brahmins.
 2. Control the administration of worldly government and receive the reward thereof.
 3. Protect religion.
 4. Exact fines for delinquency and observe adequate measure therein.
 5. Punish in proportion to the offense.
 6. Amass wealth and duly expend it.
 7. Supervise the management of elephants, horses, and cattle and the functions of ministerial subordinates.
 8. Levy war on due occasion.
 9. Never ask for alms.
 10. Favor the meritorious and the like.

The *Vaisya* also must perform the same three duties of the Brahmin, and in addition must occupy himself in: 1. Service. 2. Agriculture. 3. Trade. 4. The care of cattle. 5. The carrying of loads. . . .

The *Sudra* is incapable of any other privilege than to serve these three castes, wear their cast-off garments and eat their leavings. He may be a painter, goldsmith, blacksmith, carpenter, and trade in salt, honey, milk, butter-milk, clarified butter and grain.

Those of the fifth class, are reckoned as beyond the pale of religion, like infidels, Jews, and the like.⁷ By the inter-marriages of these, sixteen other classes are formed. The son of Brahmin parents is acknowledged as a Brahmin. If the mother be a *Kshatriya* (the father being a Brahmin), the progeny is called *Murdhavasikta*. If the mother be a *Vaisya*, the son is named *Ambastha*, and if a *Sudra* girl, *Nishada*. If the father and mother are both *Kshatriya*, the progeny is *Kshatriya*. If the mother be a Brahmin (and the father a *Kshatriya*), the son is called *Suta*. If the mother be a *Vaisya*, the son is *Mahisya*. If the mother be a *Sudra*, the progeny is *Ugra*. If both parents be *Vaisya*, the progeny is *Vaisya*. If the mother be a Brahmin (which is illicit), the progeny is *Vaideha* but if she be a *Kshatriya*, which also is regarded as improper, he is *Magadha*. From the *Vaisya* by a *Sudra* mother is produced a *Karana*. When both parents are *Sudra*, the progeny is *Sudra*. If the mother be a Brahmin, the progeny is *Chandala*. If she be a *Kshatriya*, it is called *Chatta*. From a *Sudra* by a *Vaisya* girl is produced the *Ayogava*.

In the same way still further ramifications are formed, each with different customs and modes of worship and each with infinite distinctions of habitation, profession, and rank of ancestry that defy computation. . . .

KARMA

Or the ripening of actions. This is a system of knowledge of an amazing and extraordinary character, in which the learned of Hindustan concur

⁴The outcastes of Hindu society.

⁵The four collections of ancient poetry that are essential sacred texts among Hindus.

⁶Hindu deities.

⁷Abu'l Fazl is drawing an analogy for his Muslim readers. Just as Muslims consider all nonbelievers to be outside the community of God, so Hindus regard the *Mlechchha* as outside their community.

without dissenting opinion. It reveals the particular class of actions performed in a former birth which have occasioned the events that befall men in this present life, and prescribes the special expiation of each sin, one by one. It is of four kinds.

The first kind discloses the particular action which has brought a man into existence in one of the five classes into which mankind is divided, and the action which occasions the assumption of a male or female form. A *Kshatriya* who lives continently, will, in his next birth, be born a *Brahmin*. A *Vaisya* who hazards his transient life to protect a Brahmin, will become a *Kshatriya*. A *Sudra* who lends money without interest and does not defile his tongue by demanding repayment, will be born a *Vaisya*. A *Mlechchha* who serves a *Brahmin* and eats food from his house till his death, will become a *Sudra*. A *Brahmin* who undertakes the profession of a *Kshatriya* will become a *Kshatriya*, and thus a *Kshatriya* will become a *Vaisya*, and a *Vaisya* a *Sudra*, and a *Sudra* a *Mlechchha*. Whosoever accepts in alms . . . the bed on which a man has died⁸ . . . will, in the next birth, from a man become a woman. Any woman or *Mlechchha*, who in the temple . . . sees the form of *Narayana*,⁹ and worships him with certain incantations, will in the next birth, if a woman, become a man, and if a *Mlechchha*, a *Brahmin*. . . .

The second kind shows the strange effects of actions on health of body and in the production of manifold diseases.

Madness is the punishment of disobedience to father and mother. . . .

Pain in the eyes arises from having looked upon another's wife. . . .

Dumbness is the consequence of killing a sister. . . .

Colic results from having eaten with an impious person or a liar. . . .

Consumption is the punishment of killing a *Brahmin*. . . .

The third kind indicates the class for actions which have caused sterility and names suitable remedies. . . .

A woman who does not menstruate, in a former existence . . . roughly drove away the children of her neighbors who had come as usual to play at her house. . . .

A woman who gives birth to only daughters is thus punished for having contemptuously regarded her husband from pride. . . .

A woman who has given birth to a son that dies and to a daughter that lives, has, in her former existence, taken animal life. Some say that she had killed goats. . . .

The fourth kind treats of riches and poverty, and the like. Whoever distributes alms at auspicious times, as during eclipses of the moon and sun, will become rich and bountiful (in his next existence). Whoso at these times, visits any place of pilgrimage . . . and there dies, will possess great wealth, but will be avaricious and of a surly disposition. Whosoever when hungry and with food before him, hears the supplication of a poor man and bestows it all upon him, will be rich and liberal. But whosoever has been deprived of these three opportunities, will be empty-handed and poor in his present life.

⁸An "unclean" object.

⁹The personification of solar and cosmic energy underlying creation.

Women in Ottoman Society



26 ▼ *Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, TURKISH LETTERS*

Many of Muhammad's teachings were favorable to women. He taught the spiritual equality between men and women in God's eyes, and in his own treatment of his wives and daughters he exemplified his teachings about the moral and ethical dimensions of marriage. Women were among his earliest and most important followers and sometimes fought alongside men on the battlefield. For reasons that are not well understood, as Islam expanded and developed, women's position changed markedly. Women, especially from the upper classes, were secluded in their homes and required to wear veils in public. Their role in religious affairs disappeared, and vocational and educational opportunities declined. Some came to believe that Heaven itself was closed to females.

As the Ottomans and other Turkic peoples moved into Southwest Asia and became Muslims, they accepted the norms of the people they encountered in regard to the status of women. To Ogier de Busbecq (1522–1590), the European diplomat who resided in sixteenth-century Istanbul for six years, the role of women was one of many extraordinary aspects of Ottoman culture. (For more on Busbecq, see introduction to source 21.)

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Busbecq, why do the Ottomans practice the seclusion of women?
2. What are the distinctions between a man's lawful wife and his concubines?
3. Busbecq's account reveals that despite policies such as seclusion and the veil, Turkish women were not without rights and authority in certain areas. What were some of these rights and powers?
4. What does the Ottoman custom of divorce reveal about the status of women?
5. As a distinguished diplomat, Busbecq was in a position mainly to observe the practices of well-to-do and privileged families. Do you think that he would have seen similar customs in poor and rural families?

The Turks are the most careful people in the world of the modesty of their wives, and therefore keep them shut up at home and hide them away, so that they scarce see the light of day. But if they have to go into the streets, they are sent out so covered and wrapped up in veils that they seem to those who meet them mere gliding ghosts. They have the means of seeing men through their linen or silken veils, while no part of their own body is exposed to men's view. For it is a received opinion among them, that no

woman who is distinguished in the very smallest degree by her figure or youth can be seen by a man without his desiring her, and therefore without her receiving some contamination; and so it is the universal practice to confine the women to the harem. Their brothers are allowed to see them, but not their brothers-in-law. Men of the richer classes, or of higher rank, make it a condition when they marry, that their wives shall never set foot outside the threshold, and that no man or woman shall be admitted to see them for

any reason whatever, not even their nearest relations, except their fathers and mothers, who are allowed to pay a visit to their daughters at the Turkish Easter.¹

On the other hand, if the wife has a father of high rank, or has brought a larger dowry than usual, the husband promises on his part that he will take no concubine, but will keep to her alone. Otherwise, the Turks are not forbidden by any law to have as many concubines as they please in addition to their lawful wives. Between the children of wives and those of concubines there is no distinction, and they are considered to have equal rights. As for concubines they either buy them for themselves or win them in war; when they are tired of them there is nothing to prevent their bringing them to market and selling them; but they are entitled to their freedom if they have

borne children to their master. . . . A wife who has a portion settled on her² is mistress of her husband's house, and all the other women have to obey her orders. The husband, however, may choose which of them shall spend the night with him. He makes known his wishes to the wife, and she sends to him the slave he has selected. . . . Only Friday night, which is their Sabbath,³ is supposed to belong to the wife; and she grumbles if her husband deprives her of it. On all the other nights he may do so as he pleases.

Divorces are granted among them for many reasons which it is easy for the husbands to invent. The divorced wife receives back her dowry, unless the divorce has been caused by some fault on her part. There is more difficulty in a woman's getting a divorce from her husband.

¹Busbecq apparently is referring to the festival of Bairam, which follows Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting from sunup to sundown. He equated Ramadan with the Christian practice of Lent, so the identification of Bairam with Easter is logical but lacking in theological merit.

²Brings a dowry to the marriage.

³Like Sundays in Christian lands, Fridays (actually beginning at sunset on Thursdays) in the Muslim world were days of rest, given over to religious acts and rituals.

The Beginnings of Sikhism in India



27 ▼ *Nanak,*

SACRED HYMNS FROM THE ADI-GRANTH

The Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) was not the only person in sixteenth-century India who dreamed of combining elements of Hinduism and Islam into a new religious faith. Such a process was going on during his reign and resulted in the founding of Sikhism, a religion that now has approximately ten million followers, mostly in the northwest Indian state of East Punjab. The founder of Sikhism and its first guru, or teacher, was Nanak, who lived from 1469 to 1539. Born into a Hindu family in modern Pakistan, Nanak as a young man sought out the teaching of Muslim and Hindu mystics and holy men. At the age of thirty he began to wander through India searching for disciples who would accept his message of love and reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims. He taught that external religious acts such as bathing in the sacred Ganges River or making a pilgrimage to Mecca are worthless before God unless inward sincerity and true morality accompany them. As a strict and uncompromising monotheist, he declared that love of God alone is sufficient to free any person of any caste from the law of Karma, bringing an end to the cycle of reincarnation and resulting in the absorption into the One.

The following poems come from the holy book of Sikhism, known as the *Adi-Granth*, or *Granth Sabid*. Compiled by Arjan (1563–1606), the fifth guru, it con-

sists mostly of hymns and poetry composed by Nanak and other early gurus. It attained its final form in 1705–1706, when the tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708), added a number of hymns and declared that from then on the *Adi-Granth* itself, not any individual, was Sikhism's true guru. The following excerpts are taken from poems of Nanak.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What Muslim elements can be found in Nanak's message? What Hindu elements? What Hindu and Muslim practices does he reject?
2. Which religion, Hinduism or Islam, seems to have had the stronger impact on Nanak's religious views?
3. Once Sikhism was established, Hindu and Muslim authorities persecuted it. Why would the Sikhs' religion constitute such a serious threat to both Muslim and Hindu societies?
4. What parallels can you discover between Nanak's message and Martin Luther's (Chapter 4 Vol. A, source 1)? What differences?

There is one God,
Eternal Truth is His Name;
Maker of all things,
Fearing nothing and at enmity with nothing,
Timeless is His Image;
Not begotten, being of His own Being;
By the grace of the Guru, made known to men.

It is not through thought that He is to be
comprehended
Though we strive to grasp Him a hundred
thousand times;
Nor by outer silence and long deep meditation
Can the inner silence be reached;
Nor is man's hunger for God appeasable
By piling up world-loads of wealth.
All the innumerable devices of worldly
wisdom
Leave a man disappointed; not one avails.
How then shall we know the Truth?
How shall we rend the veils of untruth away?
Abide thou by His Will, and make thine own,
His will, O Nanak, that is written in thy
heart.

He cannot be installed like an idol,
Nor can man shape His likeness.
He made Himself and maintains Himself
On His heights unstained forever;
Honored are they in His shrine
Who meditate upon Him.

Those who have inner belief in the Name,
Always achieve their own liberation,
Their kith and kin are also saved.
Guided by the light of the Guru
The disciple steers safe himself.
And many more he saves;
Those enriched with inner belief
Do not wander begging.
Such is the power of His stainless Name,
He who truly believes in it, knows it.

There is no counting men's prayers,
There is no counting their ways of adoration.
Thy lovers, O Lord, are numberless;
Numberless those who read aloud from the
Vedas,¹

¹Basic Hindu texts that originally were sacred books of the Aryans, Sanskrit-speaking invaders from the steppes

of western Asia who by 1500 B.C.E. ruled northwest India.

Numberless those Yogis² who are detached
from the world;

Numberless are Thy Saints contemplating,
Thy virtues and Thy wisdom;
Numberless are the benevolent, the lovers of
their kind.

Numberless Thy heroes and martyrs³
Facing the steel of their enemies;
Numberless those who in silence
Fix their deepest thoughts upon Thee;

Pilgrimages, penances, compassion and
almsgiving
Bring a little merit, the size of sesame seed.
But he who hears and believes and loves the
Name
Shall bathe and be made clean
In a place of pilgrimage within him.

When in time, in what age, in what day of the
month or week
In what season and in what month did'st Thou
create the world?

The Pundits⁴ do not know or they would have
written it in the Puranas,⁵

The Qazis do not know, or they would have
recorded it in the Qur'an,

Nor do the Yogis know the moment of the day,
Nor the day of the month or the week, nor the
month nor the season.

Only God Who made the world knows when
He made it.

The Vedas proclaim Him,
So do the readers of the Puranas;
The learned speak of Him in many discourses;
Brahma⁷ and Indra⁸ speak of Him,
Shiva⁹ speaks of Him, Siddhas¹⁰ speak of Him,
The Buddhas¹¹ He has created, proclaim Him.

...

Maya, the mythical goddess;¹²
Sprang from the One, and her womb brought
forth

Three acceptable disciples of the One:
Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
Brahma, it is said bodies forth the world,
Vishnu it is who sustains it;
Shiva the destroyer, who absorbs,
He controls death and judgment.

God makes them to work as He wills,
He sees them ever, they see Him not;
That of all is the greatest wonder.

I have described the realm of *dharmā*.
Now I shall describe the realm of Knowledge;

How many are the winds, the fires, the waters.
How many are the Krishnas¹³ and Shivas,
How many are the Brahmas fashioning the
worlds,

Of many kinds and shapes and colors;
How many worlds, like our own there are,
Where action produces the consequences.

... How many adepts, Buddhas and Yogis are
there,

How many goddesses and how many images of
the goddesses;

How many gods and demons and how many
sages;

How many hidden jewels in how many oceans,
How many the sources of life;
How many the modes and diversities of
speech,

How many are the kings, the rulers and the
guides of men;

How many the devoted there are, who pursue
this divine knowledge.

His worshipers are numberless, saith Nanak.

²Persons with occult powers achieved through discipline of the body.

³Muslim warriors.

⁴Brahmins learned in Hindu religion and law.

⁵A collection of popular Hindu books containing stories of the gods.

⁶Muslim judges.

⁷The Hindu creator-god.

⁸The war-god of the Aryans and the embodiment of

strength, courage, and leadership; a prominent figure in the Vedas.

⁹The god of destruction, death, and fertility.

¹⁰A class of demigods, beings more powerful than mortals but not divine.

¹¹Those who have been enlightened.

¹²A Hindu goddess who symbolizes material creation.

¹³The most popular of the god Vishnu's incarnations.

Chapter 7

Continuity and Change in East and Southeast Asia

Important changes took place in East and Southeast Asia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but in a political and cultural context that remained what it had been for more than a millennium. In terms of size, wealth, population, technology, and military might, China, as it had for centuries, overshadowed the smaller states and nomadic societies that surrounded it. With some justification the Chinese considered their state the “central kingdom” and viewed all other peoples as barbarians. Three neighboring states — Japan, Korea, and Vietnam — had borrowed extensively from the Chinese, but all three maintained their political independence and cultural distinctiveness. Southeast Asia, which includes both the Asian mainland east of India and south of China and also the thousands of islands that today comprise Indonesia and the Philippines, remained an area of small kingdoms, city-states, and stateless societies. The dominance of Islam and Buddhism in the region reflects the many centuries that India, not China, had been the main cultural influence.

Until the sixteenth century direct contacts between these East Asian societies and Europe had been exceptionally rare. True, trade between the two regions had existed for centuries, but it had been carried on by Arab, Indian, and central Asian intermediaries. It is also true that a small number of European missionaries, diplomats, and merchants had taken advantage of Eurasia’s relative peace and order under Mongol rule to travel to China in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. But after the Mongol Empire broke apart around 1350, travel between China and Europe became

virtually impossible, and direct contacts between east and west Eurasia ended.

Then, in the early 1500s, the Portuguese began to arrive in the coastal cities of East and Southeast Asia, seeking spices and converts to Christianity. The Spanish, Dutch, and English followed, and in time these Europeans would have an immense impact on the region. Hints of that impact were already evident in the first years of contact. The major port city of Malacca on the Malaysian Peninsula was conquered by the Portuguese in 1511, the Philippines were annexed by the Spaniards in the 1500s, and regions of northwest Java were taken over by the Dutch in the early seventeenth century; Roman Catholic missionaries became active in Japan, the Philippines, and eastern Indonesia; firearms became more available; and existing commercial networks were considerably altered with the arrival of aggressive Portuguese and Dutch traders.

Yet for most of the region the arrival of Europeans was a notable but not decisive event. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Japan, for example, the most significant development was the end of civil war and the rise of the Tokugawa shogunate in the early 1600s. Japan's new rulers did all they could to snuff out European influences. Missionaries were expelled, and Christianity was outlawed. Firearms were confiscated, and trade was reduced to the one Dutch ship per year permitted in the port of Nagasaki.

Similarly the Europeans' arrival had no bearing on China's politics. After taking power in 1368, the Ming restored native Chinese rule after a century of Mongol dominance and revived traditional practices such as the civil service examinations that the Mongols had abandoned. In the sixteenth century the quality and effectiveness of Ming rulers deteriorated, and by the early 1600s the Chinese experienced rising taxes, bureaucratic factionalism, neglect of public works, peasant rebellion, and military weakness — indications throughout Chinese history of a dynasty in decline. The last Ming emperor, Sizong, paid the price when a peasant rebellion ended his rule in 1644 and led to the founding of a new foreign dynasty under the Manchus.

The European impact was greatest in Southeast Asia. The decline of Malacca as the region's major commercial center is just one example of how the Portuguese and Dutch disrupted regional trade patterns. Even in Southeast Asia, however, only a small amount of territory came under European political control, and long-established cultural, political, and religious patterns persisted despite the Europeans' arrival.

Confucianism in China and Japan

No philosopher has influenced the values and behavior of more human beings than the Chinese thinker Kong Fuzi (ca. 551–479 B.C.E.), known in the West by his Latinized name Confucius. Like many other thinkers of his day, Confucius was distressed by the political fragmentation and turbulence that plagued China during the Eastern Zhou Era (771–221 B.C.E.). A scholar intent on pursuing a career in public service, he turned to teaching only after his efforts to achieve a position as a ruler's trusted advisor had failed. He proved to be a gifted teacher, one who is reputed to have had more than three thousand students, some of whom collected his sayings in a book entitled *Lun-yu*, or *Analects*.

Confucius taught that China's troubles were rooted in the failure of its people and leaders to understand and act according to the rules of proper conduct. Proper conduct meant actions conforming to the standards of an idealized Chinese past, when all of China was structured along lines of behavior and authority paralleling those of a harmonious family. Confucius taught that just as fathers, wives, sons, and daughters have specific roles and obligations within families, individuals have roles and obligations in society that depend on age, gender, marital status, ancestry, and social standing. Subjects owed rulers obedience, and rulers were expected to be models of virtue and benevolence. Children owed parents love and reverence, and parents, especially fathers, were expected to be kind and just. Children learned from parents, and subjects from rulers. Confucius also taught that whatever one's status, one must live according to the principles of *jen*, which meant humaneness, benevolence, and love, and *li*, a term that encompasses the concepts of ceremony, propriety, and good manners. Because the wisdom and practices of ancient sages were central to his teaching, Confucius taught that his disciples could achieve virtue only by studying the literature, history, and rituals of the past. Education in traditional values and behavior was the path to sagehood, the quality of knowing what is proper and good and acting accordingly.

Although Confucius' philosophy competed with many other schools of thought in his own time, during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) it became the official program of studies for anyone seeking an office in the imperial administration. Mastery of the Confucian Classics and their commentaries was the only path to success on the civil service examinations by which China chose its officials. Although the examination system was abolished by China's Mongol rulers during the Yuan Era (1264–1368), it was revived under the Ming (1368–1644) and continued in use until 1905. For almost two thousand years, China was administered by a literary elite devoted to Confucianism.

Confucianism's influence was not limited to China. Although it had to compete with Buddhism and other indigenous religions, Confucianism deeply affected the thought, politics, and everyday life of Korea, Vietnam, and Japan.

“Doing Good” in Seventeenth-Century China



28 ▼ *MERITORIOUS DEEDS AT NO COST*

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, interpretations of Confucianism drew mainly on the work of scholars from the Song Era (960–1279 C.E.). Known as Neo-Confucianists, these scholars had brought new energy and rigor to the Confucian tradition after several centuries of stagnation and declining influence. The greatest Neo-Confucianist was Zhu Xi (1130–1200), who presided over a huge project of historical research and wrote detailed commentaries on most of the Confucian Classics. His commentaries came to be viewed as the orthodox version of Confucianism and the official interpretation for evaluating performance on the civil service examinations during the Ming and Qing eras.

Confucian scholarship in the 1500s and 1600s, however, was more than simply rehashing and refining old ideas and formulas. With generous support from the emperor and high officials, Ming scholars completed vast research projects on history, medicine, ethics, and literature. They explored new interpretations of Confucianism that sought to apply the Sage’s wisdom to a China experiencing population growth, commercialization, urbanization, and ultimately dynastic decline and foreign conquest. Many endeavored to make Confucianism less elitist and more “popular.”

Traditional Confucianism had taught that the qualities of erudition and virtue necessary for true sagehood were theoretically attainable by anyone, but that in reality they could rarely be achieved except by a small number of privileged males who had the wealth, leisure, and intelligence for years of study and self-cultivation. Women, artisans, peasants, and even merchants were capable of understanding and internalizing aspects of Confucian teaching by observing the words and deeds of their superiors, but serious scholarship, true morality, and sagehood were beyond them. At the beginning of the sixteenth century such ideas were challenged by Wang Yangming (1472–1529), a widely published scholar who taught that everyone, regardless of his or her station, was capable of practicing exemplary morality and achieving sagehood. An official as well as a scholar, Wang was also convinced that a healthy Chinese polity depended on effectively teaching sound moral principles to people of all classes.

Wang’s ideas were well received in a China where urbanization, increased literacy, and growing wealth were creating a burgeoning demand for books, many of which brought Confucian ideas to the broad reading public. These included summaries of the Confucian Classics, editions of the Classics themselves, manuals to prepare candidates for the civil service examinations, and what were termed “morality books.” Morality books, which first appeared in the Song and Yuan eras, discussed good and bad behavior not just for the learned elite but for all classes of people, irrespective of social status, economic position, gender, and formal education. People read these books avidly. With titles such as *A Record of the Practice of Good Deeds* and *Establishing One’s Own Destiny*, morality books

convinced people that good deeds would be rewarded by worldly success, robust health, many sons, and a long life.

Among the most popular morality books of the era was the anonymous *Meritorious Deeds at No Cost*, which appeared around the middle of the seventeenth century. Unlike other such books, which recommended costly good deeds such as paying for proper family rituals in connection with marriage, coming of age, funerals, and ancestral rites, *Meritorious Deeds at No Cost* discussed laudable acts that required little or no outlay of money. It lists actions considered good for “people in general,” but mainly concentrates on good deeds appropriate to specific groups ranging from local gentry and scholars to soldiers and household servants. Its prescriptions provide insights into both basic Confucian values and also contemporary Chinese views of class, family, and gender.

Meritorious Deeds at No Cost begins with the “local gentry,” a term that refers to individuals who have the rank and status of members of the official class, but who reside at home and may not have any specific political responsibilities. The author discusses the gentry’s social responsibilities in the local community, but not their political role in the imperial bureaucracy. The next group, “scholars,” refers to individuals at various stages of preparing for the civil service examinations. As educated individuals and potential officials, their status placed them below the gentry but above the common people. The recommended meritorious deeds for this group reveal that many “scholars” were also teachers.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In what ways do the responsibilities of the various groups differ from one another? In what ways do they reflect certain underlying assumptions about what makes a good society?
2. According to this document, what should be the attitude of the upper classes (gentry and scholars) to those below them? Conversely, how should peasants, merchants, and artisans view their social superiors?
3. What views of women and sexuality are stated or implied in this treatise?
4. What views of money and moneymaking are stated or implied in this treatise?
5. According to this treatise, what specific kinds of behaviors and attitudes are components of filial piety?
6. Taking the document as a whole, what conclusions can be drawn about the ultimate purpose or highest good the author hopes to achieve through the various kinds of behaviors he describes?

LOCAL GENTRY

Take the lead in charitable donations.
Rectify your own conduct and transform the
common people.

Make a sincere effort to inform the authorities
of what would be beneficial to the people of
your locality. . . .

If people have suffered a grave injustice, expose
and correct it.

Settle disputes among your neighbors fairly.
 When villagers commit misdeeds, admonish
 them boldly and persuade them to desist.
 Do not let yourself be blinded by emotion and
 personal prejudices.
 Be tolerant of the mistakes of others.
 Be willing to listen to that which is displeas-
 ing to your ears.
 Do not make remarks about women's sexiness.
 Do not harbor resentment when you are
 censured.
 Protect virtuous people.
 Hold up for public admiration women who are
 faithful to their husbands and children who
 are obedient to their parents.
 Restrain those who are stubborn and unfilial.¹
 Prevent plotting and intrigue.
 Endeavor to improve manners and cus-
 toms. . . .
 Prevent the younger members of your family
 from oppressing others by taking advantage
 of your position. . . .
 Do not be arrogant, because of your own power
 and wealth, toward relatives who are poor or
 of low status. . . .
 Do not ignore your own relatives and treat
 others as if they were your kin.
 Influence other families to cherish good
 deeds. . . .
 Do not disport yourself with lewd friends. . . .
 Do not allow yourself to be overcome by
 personal feelings and therefore treat others
 unjustly. . . .
 Restrain others from arranging lewd theater
 performances. . . .
 Instruct your children, grandchildren, and
 nephews to be humane and compassionate
 toward all and to avoid anger and self-
 indulgence.
 Do not deceive or oppress younger brothers or
 cousins.
 Encourage others to read and study without
 minding the difficulties.

Urge others to esteem charity and disdain
 personal gain.
 Do not underestimate the value of others [or
 underpay them]. . . .
 Persuade others to settle lawsuits through
 conciliation.
 Try to settle complaints and grievances among
 others. . . .
 Curb the strong and protect the weak.
 Show respect to the aged and compassion for
 the poor.
 Do not keep too many concubines.
 Do not keep catamites.² . . .

SCHOLARS

Be loyal to the emperor and filial to your
 parents.
 Honor your elder brothers and be faithful to
 your friends.
 Establish yourself in life by cleaving to honor
 and fidelity.
 Instruct the common people in the virtues of
 loyalty and filial piety.
 Respect the writings of sages and worthies.
 Be wholehearted in inspiring your students to
 study. . . .
 Try to improve your speech and behavior.
 Teach your students also to be mindful of their
 speech and behavior. . . .
 Be patient in educating the younger members
 of poor families.
 If you find yourself with smart boys, teach
 them sincerity; and with children of the rich
 and noble, teach them decorum and
 duty. . . .
 Do not speak or write thoughtlessly of what
 concerns the women's quarters.
 Do not expose the private affairs of others or
 harbor evil suspicions about them.
 Do not write or post notices which defame
 other people.

¹Being disobedient or disrespectful to one's parents.

²Boys kept by men for sexual purposes.

Do not write petitions or accusations to higher authorities. . . .

Do not encourage the spread of immoral and lewd novels [by writing, reprinting, expanding, etc.]. . . .

Do not attack or vilify commoners; do not oppress ignorant villagers. . . .

Do not ridicule other people's handwriting. . . .

Make others desist from unfiliality toward their parents or unkindness toward relatives and friends.

Educate the ignorant to show respect to their ancestors and live in harmony with their families. . . .

PEASANTS

Do not miss the proper time for farm work. . . .

Do not obstruct or cut off paths. Fill up holes that might give trouble to passersby. . . .

Do not steal and sell your master's grain in connivance with his servants.

Do not damage crops in your neighbors' fields by leaving animals to roam at large, relying on your landlord's power and influence to protect you.

Do not encroach [on others' property] beyond the boundaries of your own fields and watercourses, thinking to ingratiate yourself with your landlord. . . .

In plowing, do not infringe on graves or make them hard to find. . . .

Do not damage the crops in neighboring fields out of envy because they are so flourishing.

Do not instigate your landlord to take revenge on a neighbor on the pretext that the neighbor's animals have damaged your crops.

Do not through negligence in your work do damage to the fields of others.

Do not become lazy and cease being conscientious because you think your landlord does not provide enough food and wine or fails to pay you enough.

Fill up holes in graves.

Take good care of others' carts and tools. . . .

Keep carts and cattle from trampling down others' crops.

CRAFTSMEN

. . . Whenever you make something, try to make it strong and durable.

Do not be resentful toward your master if he fails to provide enough food and drink. . . .

When making things, do not leave them unfinished or rough. . . .

Do not reveal and spread abroad the secrets of your master's house.

Do not make crude imitations.

Finish your work without delay.

In your trade with others, do not practice deceit through forgery.

Do not mix damaged articles with good.

Do not break or damage finished goods.

Do not recklessly indulge in licentiousness.

Do not spoil the clothes of others.

Do not steal the materials of others.

Do not use the materials of others carelessly. . . .

MERCHANTS

Do not deceive ignorant villagers when fixing the price of goods.

Do not raise the price of fuel and rice too high. When the poor buy rice, do not give them short measure.

Sell only genuine articles.

Do not use short measure when selling and long measure when buying.

When sick people have urgent need of something, do not raise the price unreasonably.

Do not deceitfully serve unclean dishes or leftover food to customers who are unaware of the fact.

Do not dispossess or deprive others of their business by devious means.

Do not envy the prosperity of others' business and speak ill of them wherever you go.

Be fair in your dealings.
 Treat the young and the aged on the same terms as the able-bodied.
 When people come in the middle of the night with an urgent need to buy something, do not refuse them on the ground that it is too cold [for you to get up and serve them].
 Pawnshops should lend money at low interest.
 Give fair value when you exchange silver for copper coins. Especially when changing money for the poor, be generous to them.
 When a debtor owes you a small sum but is short of money, have mercy and forget about the difference. Do not bring him to bankruptcy and hatred by refusing to come to terms.
 When the poor want to buy such things as mosquito nets, clothing, and quilts, have pity on them and reduce the price. Do not refuse to come to terms.

PEOPLE IN GENERAL

Do not show anger or worry in your parents' sight.
 Accept meekly the reproaches and anger of your parents.
 Persuade your parents to correct their mistakes and return to the right path.
 Do not divulge your parents' faults to others.
 Do not let your parents do heavy work.
 Do not be disgusted with your parents' behavior when they are old and sick.
 Do not yell at your parents or give them angry looks.
 Love your brothers.
 Keep close to your relatives.
 Be attentive and obedient to the principles of Heaven and the laws of the ruler. . . .
 If you are poor, do not entertain thoughts of harming the rich.
 If you are rich, do not deceive and cheat the poor. . . .
 Do not speak of others' humble ancestry.

Do not talk about the private [women's] quarters of others. [Commentary: When others bring up such things, if they are of the younger generation, reprimand them with straight talk, and if they are older or of the same generation as you, change the subject.] . . .
 Respect women's chastity. . . .
 Do not instigate quarrels. . . .
 Do not stir up your mind with lewd and wanton thoughts.
 Do not besmirch others' honor or chastity.
 Do not intimidate others to satisfy your own ambition.
 Do not assert your own superiority by bringing humiliation upon others. . . .
 Do not dwell on others' faults while dilating [expounding at length] on your own virtues.
 Try to promote friendly relations among neighbors and relatives. . . .
 Do not get angry with household slaves when they give you cause for anger, but instead instruct them with kind words.
 Propagate among others the law of moral retribution. . . .
 Do not gossip about others' wrongdoing. . . .
 Do not be avaricious. . . .
 When you hear someone speaking about the failings of others, make him stop.
 When you hear a man praising the goodness of others, help him to do so. . . .
 When you see a man about to go whoring or gambling, try to dissuade him.
 Do not speak deceitful words.
 Do not say sharp or cruel things. . . .
 Do not deceive cripples, fools, old men, the young, or the sick. . . .
 Make peace between husbands and wives who are about to separate.
 Do not forget the kindness of others; do not remember the wrongdoing of others. . . .
 Show the way to those who have become lost.
 Help the blind and disabled to pass over dangerous bridges and roads.
 Advise others where a river is shallow or deep to cross.

Cut down thorns by the roadside to keep them from tearing people's clothes. . . .
Put stones in muddy places [to make them passable].
Lay wooden boards where the road is broken off.
At night, light a lamp for others.
Lend rainwear to others in case of rain.
Look after the household slaves lest they suffer from heat or cold, hunger or illness. . . .
Do not let your young children mistreat household slaves.
Do not listen to your wife or concubines if they should encourage you to neglect or abandon your parents. . . .
Do not humiliate or ridicule the aged, the young, or the crippled.
Do not trample down others' crops along the pathways. . . .

Do not say words which are harmful to morals and customs.
Do not stealthily peep at others' womenfolk when they are exposed by a fire in their home. . . .
Do not be impudent toward your superiors.
Do not instigate quarrels among relatives. . . .
Do not sell faithful dogs to dog butchers. . . .
Even if you see that the good sometimes suffer bad fortune and you yourself experience poverty, do not let it discourage you from doing good.
Even if you see bad men prosper, do not lose faith in ultimate recompense.
Never fail to give rice cakes or drugs first of all to your parents and only after that to your children and grandchildren. . . .
In all undertakings, think of others.

Teaching the Young in Tokugawa Japan



29 ▼ *Kaibara Ekiken,* *COMMON SENSE TEACHINGS* *FOR JAPANESE CHILDREN* *and GREATER LEARNING FOR WOMEN*

Although Chinese Neo-Confucianism had been brought to Japan by Zen Buddhist monks during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it had little influence on Japan's aristocratic ruling class until the Tokugawa Era, when the early shoguns actively supported it. The shoguns were attracted to Confucianism because it emphasized the need for social hierarchy and obedience to the ruler and officials of a centralized state. Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), a leading Confucian scholar, was an advisor of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the school founded by the Hayashi family at Edo in 1630 with shogunal financial support became the center of Confucian scholarship and education in Japan. Many provincial lords founded similar academies in their domains, and the education samurai received in these schools and from private tutors helped transform Japan's warrior aristocracy into a literate bureaucratic ruling class committed to the ethical values of Confucianism.

Among the Confucian scholars of the early Tokugawa period, few matched the literary output and popularity of Kaibara Ekiken (1630–1714). After studying in Kyoto and Edo, he served the Kuroda lords of the Fukuoka domain in south-

western Japan as physician, tutor, and scholar-in-residence. He wrote more than one hundred works on medicine, botany, philosophy, and education.

This selection draws on material from two of Ekiken's works. The first part is excerpted from his *Common Sense Teachings for Japanese Children*, a manual for tutors of children in aristocratic households. The second part is taken from *Greater Learning for Women*, a discussion of moral precepts for girls. It is thought that this treatise was written in collaboration with Token, Ekiken's wife.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to *Common Sense Teachings for Japanese Children*, what moral qualities should be inculcated in students?
2. What attitudes toward the lower classes are expressed in these two treatises?
3. How do the goals and purposes of education differ for Japanese boys and girls? How are they similar?
4. What do these treatises say about Japanese marriage customs and family life?
5. How do the attitudes toward women in Ekiken's treatise compare with views of women in sixteenth-century Europe (Chapter 4 Vol. B, sources 6–8) and Ottoman Turkey (Chapter 6, Vol. B source 26)?
6. What is there in Ekiken's educational treatises that would have furthered the Tokugawa shoguns' ambition to provide Japan with stable and peaceful government?

COMMON SENSE TEACHINGS FOR JAPANESE CHILDREN

In January when children reach the age of six, teach them numbers one through ten, and the names given to designate 100, 1,000, 10,000 and 100,000,000. Let them know the four directions, East, West, North and South. Assess their native intelligence and differentiate between quick and slow learners. Teach them Japanese pronunciation from the age of six or seven, and let them learn how to write. . . . From this time on, teach them to respect their elders, and let them know the distinctions between the upper and lower

classes and between the young and old. Let them learn to use the correct expressions.

When the children reach the age of seven, do not let the boys and girls sit together, nor must you allow them to dine together. . . .

For the eighth year. This is the age when the ancients began studying the book *Little Learning*.¹ Beginning at this time, teach the youngsters etiquette befitting their age, and caution them not to commit an act of impoliteness. Among those which must be taught are: daily deportment, the manners set for appearing before one's senior and withdrawing from his presence, how to speak or respond to one's senior or guest, how to place a serving tray or replace it

¹The *Little Learning* was written in 1187 by the Song scholar Liu Zucheng, a disciple of Zhu Xi. A book of instruction

for young children, it contains rules of behavior and excerpts from the Classics and other works.

for one's senior, how to present a wine cup and pour rice wine and to serve side dishes to accompany it, and how to serve tea. Children must also learn how to behave while taking their meals.

Children must be taught by those who are close to them the virtues of filial piety and obedience. To serve the parents well is called filial piety, and to serve one's seniors well is called obedience. The one who lives close to the children and who is able to teach must instruct the children in the early years of their life that the first obligation of a human being is to revere the parents and serve them well. Then comes the next lesson which includes respect for one's seniors, listening to their commands and not holding them in contempt. One's seniors include elder brothers, elder sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins who are older and worthy of respect. . . . As the children grow older, teach them to love their younger brothers and to be compassionate to the employees and servants. Teach them also the respect due the teachers and the behavior codes governing friends. The etiquette governing each movement toward important guests — such as standing, sitting, advancing forward, and retiring from their presence — and the language to be employed must be taught. Teach them how to pay respect to others according to the social positions held by them. Gradually the ways of filial piety and obedience, loyalty and trustworthiness, right deportment and decorum, and sense of shame must be inculcated in the children's minds and they must know how to implement them. Caution them not to desire the possessions of others, or to stoop below one's dignity in consuming excessive amounts of food and drink. . . .

Once reaching the age of eight, children must follow and never lead their elders when entering a gate, sitting, or eating and drinking. From this time on they must be taught how to become

humble and yield to others. Do not permit the children to behave as they please. It is important to caution them against "doing their own things."

At the age of ten, let the children be placed under the guidance of a teacher, and tell them about the general meaning of the five constant virtues and let them understand the way of the five human relationships.² Let them read books by the Sage³ and the wise men of old and cultivate the desire for learning. . . . When not engaged in reading, teach them the literary and military arts. . . .

Fifteen is the age when the ancients began the study of the *Great Learning*.⁴ From this time on, concentrate on the learning of a sense of justice and duty. The students must also learn to cultivate their personalities and investigate the way of governing people. . . .

Those who are born in the high-ranking families have the heavy obligations of becoming leaders of the people, of having people entrusted to their care, and of governing them. Therefore, without fail, a teacher must be selected for them when they are still young. They must be taught how to read and be informed of the ways of old, of cultivating their personalities, and of the way of governing people. If they do not learn the way of governing people, they may injure the many people who are entrusted to their care by the Way of Heaven. That will be a serious disaster. . . .

GREATER LEARNING FOR WOMEN

Seeing that it is a girl's destiny, on reaching womanhood, to go to a new home, and live in submission to her father-in-law, it is even more incumbent upon her than it is on a boy to receive with all reverence her parents' instructions. Should her parents, through their tenderness,

²The *five virtues* are human heartedness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and good faith. The *five relationships* are ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, older brother-younger brother, and friend-friend.

³In this context, the term *Sage* refers to Confucius.

⁴The *Great Learning*, a chapter taken from the *Record of Rituals*, was one of the four relatively short works that came to be known within the Confucian Classics as the Four Books.

allow her to grow up self-willed, she will infallibly show herself capricious in her husband's house, and thus alienate his affection; while, if her father-in-law be a man of correct principles, the girl will find the yoke of these principles intolerable. She will hate and decry her father-in-law, and the end of those domestic dissensions will be her dismissal from her husband's house and the covering of herself with ignominy. Her parents, forgetting the faulty education they gave her, may indeed lay all the blame on the father-in-law. But they will be in error; for the whole disaster should rightly be attributed to the faulty education the girl received from her parents.

▼ ▼ ▼

More precious in a woman is a virtuous heart than a face of beauty. The vicious woman's heart is ever excited; she glares wildly around her, she vents her anger on others, her words are harsh and her accent vulgar. When she speaks, it is to set herself above others, to upbraid others, to envy others, to be puffed up with individual pride, to jeer at others, to outdo others — all things at variance with the way in which a woman should walk. The only qualities that befit a woman are gentle obedience, chastity, mercy, and quietness.

▼ ▼ ▼

From her earliest youth a girl should observe the line of demarcation separating women from men. The customs of antiquity did not allow men and women to sit in the same apartment, to keep their wearing apparel in the same place, to bathe in the same place, or to transmit to each other anything directly from hand to hand. A woman going out at night must in all cases carry a lighted lamp; and . . . she must observe a certain distance in her relations even with her husband and with her brothers. In our days the women of lower classes, ignoring all rules of this nature, behave disorderly; they contaminate their reputations, bring down reproach upon the head of their parents and brothers, and spend their whole lives

in an unprofitable manner. Is not this truly lamentable?

▼ ▼ ▼

It is the chief duty of a girl living in the parental house to practice filial piety towards her father and mother. But after marriage her duty is to honor her father-in-law and mother-in-law, to honor them beyond her father and mother, to love and reverence them with all ardor, and to tend them with practice of every filial piety. . . . Even if your father-in-law and mother-in-law are inclined to hate and vilify you, do not be angry with them, and murmur not. If you carry piety towards them to its utmost limits, and minister to them in all sincerity, it cannot be but that they will end by becoming friendly to you.

▼ ▼ ▼

The great lifelong duty of a woman is obedience. . . . When the husband issues his instructions, the wife must never disobey them. In a doubtful case, she should inquire of her husband and obediently follow his commands. . . .

Should her husband be roused at any time to anger, she must obey him with fear and trembling, and not set herself up against him in anger and forwardness. A woman should look upon her husband as if he were Heaven itself, and never weary of thinking how she may yield to her husband and thus escape celestial castigation.

▼ ▼ ▼

Her treatment of her servant girls will require circumspection. Those low-born girls have had no proper education; they are stupid, obstinate, and vulgar in their speech. . . . Again, in her dealings with those lowly people, a woman will find many things to disapprove of. But if she be always reproving and scolding, and spend her time in hustle and anger, her household will be in a continual state of disturbance. When there is real wrongdoing, she should occasionally notice it, and point out the path of amendment, while lesser faults should be quietly endured without anger. . . .

Chinese Merchants in a Confucian World



30 ▼ *Wang Daokun,* *THE BIOGRAPHIES OF ZHU JIEFU* *AND GENTLEMAN WANG*

The Confucian tradition viewed merchants as a necessary evil and relegated them to the bottom of the social order. They were considered unproductive, lacking in skills and learning, and self-centered in their pursuit of wealth. Their travels kept them away from the ancestral hearth and prevented them from performing their duties to parents and ancestral spirits. Such views permeated the Chinese imperial bureaucracy, comprised of Confucianists who were mostly drawn from the landed gentry. Thus, Chinese commerce grew despite, not because of, the state, which closely regulated trade and often treated merchants capriciously and contemptuously. The merchants themselves were affected by their Confucian environment. Many, for example, based business decisions more on family considerations than the hard-headed pursuit of profit and, once successful, often bought land or even a scholar's degree and abandoned business to escape the onus of a merchant's low status.

Wang Daokun (1525–1593) combined a merchant's background with a Confucian education and a career in the imperial bureaucracy. His father and grandfather were salt merchants, but the gifted Wang passed the civil service examinations while in his twenties and entered government service. He served as governor of several provinces and filled important offices in the upper echelons of the Chinese army. In 1575 he abandoned his career to care for his aged parents. For the rest of his life he occupied himself by writing treatises on subjects that included card playing, drinking games, and sacrifices to ancestral spirits. He also wrote a series of biographies of Ming Era merchants, many of whom combined business success with dedication to Confucian principles. Wang's sketches provide many insights into Confucian ethics and the business climate of late Ming China.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What, according to Wang Daokun, are the virtues of Zhu Jiefu and Gentleman Wang? To what extent do the two merchants represent different virtues?
2. What is the point of the story about Gentleman Wang and Magistrate Xu?
3. What does this source reveal about Chinese attitudes toward the elderly? Toward political authority? Toward wealth? Toward women?
4. What do these biographies reveal about the government's attitudes and policies in regard to merchants? What specific episodes illustrate these attitudes?
5. Do the author's sympathies lie with the merchants or the government officials in their dealings with one another?

THE BIOGRAPHY OF ZHU JIEFU

Zhu Jiefu . . . started as a Confucian scholar. He was from Tunxi . . . and his father Hsing . . . was a salt merchant who lived away from home at Wulin. Hsing had taken Shaoji of Wulin as his concubine¹ but she was barren. Later, when he returned home for his father-in-law's birthday, his primary wife became pregnant and gave birth to Zhu Jiefu. In his early childhood, Zhu Jiefu lived in Wulin with his father and went to school there. Shaoji, relying on the father's favor, did not treat him as her son. Jiefu, however, served her respectfully and worked diligently in school. At the age of fourteen, he officially registered Wulin as his native place and was designated an official student of that place.² Shortly thereafter, his father died at Wulin. His concubine took the money and hid it with some of her mother's relatives and would not return to her husband's hometown. Jiefu wept day and night, saying, "However unworthy I may be, my late father was blameless." Finally the concubine arranged for the funeral and burial of her husband in his hometown. Thus, everything was done properly.

After the funeral, Jiefu was short of funds. Since for generations his family had been in commerce, he decided not to suffer just to preserve his scholar's cap. Therefore he handed in his resignation to the academic officials and devoted himself to the salt business. He thoroughly studied the laws on salt merchandising and was always able to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the law. . . . Therefore, all the other salt merchants respected him as their leader.

During the Jiaqing period [1522–1567], salt affairs were handled by the Central Law Officer,³ who increased the taxes suddenly, causing great inconvenience for the merchants. They gathered in Jiefu's house and asked him to serve as their

negotiator. Jiefu entered the office and stated the advantages and disadvantages of the new law eloquently in thousands of words. Leaning against his couch, the Central Law Officer listened to Jiefu's argument and finally adopted his suggestion.

At that time, the merchants suffered greatly from two scoundrels who often took them to court in the hopes of getting bribes from them. During tense moments at trials, the merchants usually turned to Jiefu as their spokesman. Being lofty and righteous, he always disclosed the scoundrels' crimes and condemned them. The merchants thus esteemed Jiefu for his virtue and wanted to give him a hundred taels⁴ of gold as a birthday present. But he protested: "Even if my acts have not been at the lofty level of a knight-errant, I did not do them for the sake of money." Thus, the merchants respected him even more and no longer talked about giving him money.

When there was a dispute among the merchants which the officials could not resolve, Jiefu could always mediate it immediately. Even when one group would go to his house and demand his compliance with their views, he would still be able to settle the dispute by indirect and gentle persuasion. Hence, people both far and near followed each other, coming to ask him to be their arbitrator. Yet, after settling a dispute, Jiefu would always step aside and never take credit himself.

The populace in Tunxi city where Jiefu lived was militant and litigious. When he returned home for his father's funeral, slanderous rumors were spread about him, but Jiefu humbled himself and never tried to get back at the instigators. Later, when he grew rich rapidly, people became even more critical. Jiefu merely behaved with even greater deference. When the ancestral shrine fell into disrepair, Jiefu on his own sent

¹It was common for men to have concubines, in some cases several of them, in addition to their legal wives. No legal impediments prevented children of concubines from inheriting their father's property.

²This meant that Zhu Jiefu was being groomed to take the

Chinese civil service examinations for entry into the imperial bureaucracy.

³An official of the imperial bureaucracy.

⁴A coin weighing approximately an ounce and a half.

workmen to repair it. When members of his lineage started talking about it, he had the workmen work during the day and consulted with his relatives in the evening. Finally the whole lineage got together and shared the task with him.

Once Jiefu bought a concubine in Wulin who bore a child after only a few months. His family was about to discard the child but Jiefu upbraided them, saying, "I love my children dearly. How could I cause someone else's child to die in the gutter?" He brought the child up and educated him until he was able to support himself. . . .

Jiefu finally discontinued his salt business and ordered his son to pursue a different career. By that time he was already planning to retire to his hometown. Then in 1568 a Central Law Officer who was appointed to inspect the salt business started to encourage secret informants. Soon Jiefu was arrested, an enemy having laid a trap for him. However, the official could not find any evidence against him. But then Ho, whose son Jiefu had once scolded, came forward to testify. Consequently, Jiefu was found guilty. When the litigation against him was completed, he was sentenced to be a frontier guard at Dinghai. The merchants said, in describing Jiefu's case: "Beating the drum, the official seized a lamb and claimed it to be a tiger; pretending to net a big fish, he actually aimed at the big bird."

When Jiefu received his sentence to enter the army, he controlled his feelings and immediately complied. His son, fearing his father would acquire a bad name, suggested that he send a petition to the Emperor. Jiefu merely sighed and said, "Your father must have offended Heaven. The truth is that the Central Law Officer is a representative of his Heavenly Majesty, not that your father is falsely charged."

Frontier General Liu had heard of Jiefu and therefore summoned him to work in his own encampment. At that time, a friend of the General's moved to Xintu upon his retirement. The General sent Jiefu to Xintu as his personal messen-

ger but within a short time Jiefu became seriously ill. He advised his son, Zhengmin: "Your father's name has been recorded in the official labor records. Now he is about to die as a prisoner. Never let your father's example stop you from behaving righteously. Remember this." Then, at the age of sixty-five, he died.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF GENTLEMAN WANG

. . . Mr. Wang lives in Shanghai. Being open and confident he has attracted the respect of many capable and prosperous people who compete to attach themselves to him. At first, Mr. Wang's capital was no greater than the average person's. Later, as he grew more prosperous every day, the number of his associates also steadily increased. To accommodate his apprentices, Mr. Wang built buildings with doors on four sides. Whenever customers came, they could be taken care of from all four directions; thus, no one ever had to wait very long.

Mr. Wang set up the following guidelines for his associates: do not let anyone who lives in another county control the banking; when lending money, never harass law-abiding people unnecessarily or give them less than they need; charge low interest on loans; do not aim at high profit and do not ask for daily interest. These principles led customers to throng to him, even ones from neighboring towns and provinces. Within a short time, Mr. Wang accumulated great wealth; in fact, of all the rich people in that area he became the richest.

Mr. Wang liked to help people and to give assistance to the poor. If anyone among his kinsmen could not afford a funeral for his parents, Mr. Wang would always buy some land and build a tomb for him. As soon as he heard someone could not make ends meet, he would buy land to rent to him. Whenever he was out traveling and met some unburied spirit, he would bid his servants bury it and present some offerings.

During the Jiaqing period there was a serious drought, and the Prefect⁵ proposed opening the granary. Considering the hardship this would cause the people, Mr. Wang sent a written report to the Prefect, as follows:

This proposal will cause starving people to travel here from hundreds of li⁶ away to wait for the distribution. Even if there are no delays on route, they may die before they get here. Yet if we make them stay home and wait for a pint of food, it will be like abandoning them to die in the gutters. I suggest that we exchange the grain for money and distribute it around the area. All the wealthy people ought to donate some money to help the poor. I myself will start with a donation of a hundred taels of gold.

The Prefect accepted his suggestion and everyone said that this was much more convenient. Then Mr. Wang also prepared some food to feed people in his own county and caused similar actions to be taken throughout the whole of Shanghai. Thus most people in this area survived. . . .

Whenever there was a dispute, Mr. Wang could always resolve it immediately, even if it was quite serious. When Magistrate Xu was in charge of Shanghai, he imprisoned someone named Zhu, who died in jail. The victim's father then presented a petition to the Emperor which worried the Magistrate. The officials, el-

ders, and local leaders were willing to offer the father a thousand taels of gold on the Magistrate's behalf, but on discussing it, they decided only Mr. Wang could settle the matter, and indeed he persuaded the father to accept the terms. Then the Magistrate was transferred to another position. Upon learning this fact, the officials, elders, and local leaders all quickly dispersed. Mr. Wang sighed and said, "It isn't easy to collect a thousand taels of gold but I will not break the promise made to the Magistrate in trouble." He then paid the thousand taels of gold and the Magistrate was out of his difficulties. Even when Magistrate Xu was dismissed soon thereafter, Mr. Wang did not voice any concern, and after two years Xu returned the thousand taels of gold to him. . . .

When Mr. Wang is at home he is always in high spirits. He likes to make friends with the chivalrous youths. In his later years he has become particularly fond of chess, often staying up all night until he either wins or loses a game. The youths say that Mr. Wang is no ordinary person, that he must have received instruction from Heaven.

Now Mr. Wang is almost one hundred years old. He has at least thirty sons and grandsons living at home with him. It is said, "One who seeks perfection will attain it." This describes Mr. Wang perfectly.

⁵Also an official of the imperial bureaucracy.

⁶A Chinese measure of distance, approximately a third of a mile.

Humanity and Nature in Chinese Painting



31 ▼ *Zhang Hung, LANDSCAPE OF SHIXIE HILL;* *Sheng Maoye, SCHOLARS GAZING* *AT A WATERFALL*

Chinese painters over the centuries have produced portraits, religious works, pictures of animals and plants, and courtly scenes, but their greatest contribution to the world's art has been the landscape. Chinese painters began to develop

their distinctive approach to landscape painting during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) and brought it to fruition in the eleventh century during the era of the Song (960–1279). From then until the twentieth century, the painting of landscapes on silk or paper with ink and muted watercolor shading has inspired China's greatest painters and attracted countless collectors and connoisseurs. The Chinese devotion to landscape painting was closely tied to the philosophies of Daoism and Confucianism, both of which viewed the natural world as a metaphor for the moral and metaphysical order underlying the universe. Thus despite the many different schools and styles of landscape painting, all Chinese landscape painters sought to capture the inner quality, or vital spirit (*qi*), of nature rather than simply to reproduce what the eye perceives. By communicating this inner quality the artist enabled viewers to see how the ever-changing, infinitely variegated phenomena of the visible landscape — wind, rain, mountains, rivers, lakes, trees, storms, mist, and snow — reveal a higher reality that Confucianists called the “supreme ultimate” and Daoists called the “Way.”

Ming Era landscape painting was characterized by many different schools and a profusion of individual styles. Some artists considered themselves amateur “scholar painters” while others were viewed as professionals. Some drew inspiration from the masters of the Song Era while others sought to recapture the stylistic qualities of painters during the Yuan Era (1264–1368). Individual artists depicted nature's vital spirit as tranquil, powerful, charming, wild, forbidding, lonely, or cold. Each artist had a distinctive style of brushwork and color.

Because of this diversity of styles, the two paintings included here cannot be considered typical Ming landscapes. But they do capture some of the general characteristics of landscape painting of the period. The first is Zhang Hung's *Landscape of Shixie Hill*, a painting in ink and light colors approximately five feet high and two feet wide. Although Zhang was one of the outstanding painters of the age, little is known about his life other than that he was born in 1577, lived most of his life in Suzhou, and probably died in 1652. The inscription on the upper-right corner of the painting reads, “In early summer of 1613, I traveled to Shixie with my revered older brother Chunyu and painted this for him.” One must look closely to see the human beings in the painting. A group of travelers is gathering at the bridge at the bottom of the painting, perhaps planning to walk up the mountain. Farther up the stream one finds four gentleman-scholars gazing at a waterfall, while a Buddhist monk approaches them with tea. Their two servants stand idly by, looking away.

The second painting is *Scholars Gazing at a Waterfall* by Sheng Maoye. Painted on silk in 1630, it is slightly longer and approximately a foot wider than Zhang's painting. Sheng's works are dated from 1594 to 1640, but the dates of the artist's birth and death are unknown. The poetic inscription reads “Pines and rocks are proper to old age; / Wisteria vines do not count the years.” As in Zhang's painting, learned scholars contemplate the rushing torrent while their servants look away.

(See page 134 for Questions for Analysis.)



Zhang Hung, Landscape of Shixie Hill



Sheng Maoye, Scholars Gazing at a Waterfall

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How would you characterize the “inner spirit” of nature each artist seeks to communicate? How are the two artists’ visions similar and different?
 2. How are the human beings in each picture interacting with nature?
 3. What message does each painting communicate about humanity’s relationship to the natural world? Consider both the actions of the human beings in each painting as well as the man-made structures in Zhang’s painting.
 4. Both paintings show learned scholars contemplating a waterfall, a scene depicted in literally hundreds of Chinese paintings. Why would the contemplation of a waterfall be particularly meaningful?
 5. In each painting the scholars’ servants are not paying any attention to the waterfall. What message does this communicate?
-

Political Decline and Recovery in China and Japan

Eighteenth-century China and Japan were models of well-governed, prosperous states with enlightened rulers and obedient subjects. This had seemed highly unlikely a century and a half earlier, when both societies faced severe political and social problems. Japan, in the midst of a devastating civil war, seemed on the brink of disintegrating into hundreds of small feuding states. China, meanwhile, was suffering from the incompetent rule of a declining Ming Dynasty.

The incessant civil strife of sixteenth-century Japan was rooted in long-standing tensions inherent in Japan’s feudal society. In the 1300s power had begun to shift away from the shogun, a military commander who since the late twelfth century had ruled Japan through his armed retainers in the name of the emperor, to local military families who controlled districts and provinces. With a weakened central government, local wars and feuds became endemic among the *daimyo*, the emerging provincial lords, who enlisted both commoners and *samurai*, lesser members of the nobility, to fight in their armies. The warfare intensified between 1467 and 1568, a period sometimes called the *Warring States* era.

This ruinous feudal anarchy ended as a result of the efforts of three strong military leaders bent on unifying Japan. Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) abolished the powerless Ashikaga shogunate and brought approximately half of Japan under his rule before a traitorous vassal assassinated him. His successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), continued the work of consolidation. It was completed by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), who conquered his rivals and had himself declared shogun in 1603. Ieyasu and his successors stabilized Japan by imposing a sociopolitical order that lasted until 1867.

China’s problems resulted more from the failure of individual rulers than the defects of a political system. The dedication and competence of Ming rulers suddenly and disastrously declined in the sixteenth century, especially during the

interminable reign of the Wanli emperor (1573–1620). So great was the void created by the apathetic late Ming emperors that the efforts of several capable ministers could not save the dynasty. Factional strife, oppressive taxation, corruption, unchecked banditry, and bankruptcy led to rebellion, the dynasty's collapse, and foreign conquest. In 1644 a rebel leader, Li Zicheng (1605–1645), captured Beijing, and in despair the last Ming emperor hanged himself. Within months, however, Li was driven from the city by the Manchus, northern invaders from the region of the Amur River. In the following decades the Manchus extended their authority over all of China, established China's last dynasty, the Qing, and breathed new life into the imperial system.

Symptoms of Ming Decline



32 ▼ *Yang Lien, MEMORIAL TO EMPEROR MING XIZONG CONCERNING EUNUCH WEI ZHONGXIAN*

The challenges confronting China's late Ming rulers were in most respects no different from those of countless previous emperors and ministers. They had to keep expenditures in line with revenues; defend China's borders; maintain roads, dams, and bridges; make large and small decisions; and carry out the countless tasks that were part of the daily functioning of government. From the 1580s onward, however, emperors either ignored or were distracted from such tasks and failed to deal effectively with new problems such as Manchu pressure in the north, pirate raids, and mounting banditry. Rebellion finally overwhelmed the government and brought about the fall of the Ming in 1644.

The following selection, a memorial directed to the emperor by a high official, Yang Lien, highlights another problem of late Ming government, namely the growing influence of court eunuchs, castrated males whose theoretical purpose was to guard and administer the emperor's harem, but whose functions often extended to other areas of administration and government. Under Emperor Ming Xizong (r. 1620–1627), a young man mainly interested in carpentry, the eunuch Wei Zhongxian (1568–1627), who had served as a butler for the emperor's mother, rose to power in 1623 on the basis of his friendship with the young emperor's former wet nurse. Backed by a small eunuch army in the palace and spies throughout the empire, Wei purged his enemies, levied new taxes, and flouted rules and procedures. He was bitterly opposed by Confucian scholar-officials, especially elite members of the Donglin party, made up of scholar-officials and former office holders connected with the Donglin (Eastern Forest) Academy at Wusih on the lower Yangzi River.

Yang Lien, a member of the Donglin party, submitted the following memorial (memorandum) to the emperor in 1624 in which he described twenty-four crimes of Eunuch Wei. He was carrying out his duties as a member of the Board of Censors, a branch of the imperial administration that served as the "eyes and ears" of the emperor by investigating officials' conduct, hearing subjects'

complaints, and reporting problems to the emperor. Emperor Ming Xizong ignored the letter, and in 1625 Yang was accused of treason, tortured, and executed on orders of Wei. Wei himself fell from power in 1627 when the new emperor, Ming Chongzhen (r. 1627–1644) exiled him to the Anhui province, where Wei hanged himself rather than face an official inquiry into his conduct.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Yang, what motivated him to write this memorandum to the emperor?
2. This excerpt contains only a few of Wei's twenty-four alleged "crimes." How many of them can you find in the excerpt?
3. What is it about Wei's actions that particularly violate the Confucian sensibilities of Yang?
4. What does the memorandum reveal about the basis of Wei's authority and political strength?
5. What does the memorandum tell us about the qualities of the Emperor Ming Xizong?

A treacherous eunuch has taken advantage of his position to act as emperor. He has seized control and disrupted the government, deceived the ruler and flouted the law. He recognizes no higher authority, turns his back on the favors the emperor has conferred on him, and interferes with the inherited institutions. I beg Your Majesty to order an investigation so that the dynasty can be saved.

When Emperor Hongwu¹ first established the laws and institutions, eunuchs were not allowed to interfere in any affairs outside the palace; even within it they did nothing more than clean up. Anyone who violated these rules was punished without chance of amnesty, so the eunuchs prudently were cautious and obedient. The succeeding emperors never changed these laws. . . .

How would anyone have expected that, with a wise ruler like Your Majesty on the throne, there would be a chief eunuch like Wei Zhongxian, a man totally uninhibited, who destroys court pre-

cedents, ignores the ruler to pursue his selfish ends, corrupts good people, ruins the emperor's reputation as a Yao or Shun,² and brews unimaginable disasters? The entire court has been intimidated. No one dares denounce him by name. My responsibility really is painful. But when I was supervising secretary of the office of scrutiny for war, the previous emperor personally ordered me to help Your Majesty become a ruler like Yao and Shun. I can still hear his words. If today out of fear I also do not speak out, I will be abandoning my determination to be loyal and my responsibility to serve the state. I would also be turning my back on your kindness in bringing me back to office after retirement and would not be able to face the former emperor in Heaven.

I shall list for Your Majesty Zhongxian's twenty-four most heinous crimes. Zhongxian was originally an ordinary, unreliable sort. He had himself castrated in middle age in order to enter the palace. He is illiterate. . . . Your Majesty was impressed by his minor acts of service and

¹The first Ming emperor, who ruled from 1368 to 1398.

²Legendary emperors from China's prehistoric past, famous for their virtue and wisdom.

plucked him out of obscurity to confer honors on him. . . .

Our dynastic institutions require that rescripts³ be delegated to the grand secretaries. This not only allows for calm deliberation and protects from interference, but it assures that someone takes the responsibility seriously. Since Zhongxian usurped power, he issues the imperial edicts. If he accurately conveys your orders, it is bad enough. If he falsifies them, who can argue with him? Recently, men have been forming groups of three or five to push their ideas in the halls of government, making it as clamorous as a noisy market. Some even go directly into the inner quarters without formal permission. It is possible for a scrap of paper in the middle of the night to kill a person without Your Majesty or the grand secretaries knowing anything of it. The harm this causes is huge. The grand secretaries are so depressed that they ask to quit. Thus Wei Zhongxian destroys the political institutions that had lasted over two hundred years. . . .

One of your concubines, of virtuous and pure character, had gained your favor. Zhongxian was afraid she would expose his illegal behavior, so conspired with his cronies. They said she had a sudden illness to cover up his murdering her. Thus Your Majesty is not able to protect the concubines you favor. . . .

During the forty years that your father the former emperor was heir apparent, Wang An⁴ was unique in worrying about all the dangers he faced, protecting him from harm, never giving in to intimidation or temptation. Didn't he deserve some of the credit for your father's getting to the throne? When he died and Your Majesty succeeded, Wang An protected you, so he cannot be called disloyal. Even if he had committed some offense, Your Majesty should have explained what he had done wrong publicly for all to see. Instead Zhongxian, because of his personal hatreds, forged an imperial order and had him killed in Nanhai park. His head and body were sepa-

rated, his flesh given to the dogs and pigs. This not only revealed his enmity toward Wang An, but his enmity toward all the former emperor's old servants, even his old dogs and horses. It showed him to be without the slightest fear. From that time on, which of the eunuchs was willing to be loyal or principled? I do not know how many thousands or hundreds of the rest of the eunuchs, important and unimportant alike, were slaughtered or driven away for no crime. . . .

Doesn't Your Majesty remember the time when Zhongxian, against all rules, rode his horse in the palace grounds? Those who are favored too much become arrogant; those who receive too many favors grow resentful. I heard that this spring when he rode a horse in front of Your Majesty, you shot and killed the horse, but forgave Zhongxian. Despite your generosity, Zhongxian did not beg to die for his offense, but rather acted more arrogantly in Your Majesty's presence and spoke resentfully of Your Majesty when away. He is on guard morning and night, missing nothing. His trusted followers keep guard all the time. In the past traitors and bandits have struggled to wreak havoc and take over. This is in fact what Your Majesty now faces. How can you release a tiger right by your elbow? Even if Zhongxian were cut into mincemeat, it would not atone for his sins. . . .

There is adequate evidence of his crimes. They are widely known and have been widely witnessed; they are not a matter of gossip. Zhongxian, guilty of these twenty-four great crimes, kills or replaces any eunuch he fears will expose his treachery. Thus those close at hand are terrified and keep silent. He expels or imprisons any of the officials he fears will expose his villainy, so the officials also all look the other way and keep silent. There are even ignorant spineless fellows eager to get rich and powerful who attach themselves to him or hang around his gate. They praise whatever he likes and criticize whatever he hates, doing whatever is needed.

³Official decrees and edicts.

⁴The eunuch Wang An was a supporter of the Donglin party

and a bitter opponent of Wei Zhongxian. He was killed on Wei's orders in 1621.

Thus whatever he inside wants they do outside, whatever they outside say he responds to inside. Disaster or good luck can depend on slight movements. And if per chance the evil deeds of the inner court are revealed, there is still Lady Ke⁵ to make excuses or cover up.

As a consequence, everyone in the palace recognizes the existence of Zhongxian but not of Your Majesty; everyone in the capital recognizes the existence of Zhongxian but not of Your Majesty. Even the major and minor officials and workers, by turning toward the sources of power, unconsciously show that they do not recognize the existence of Your Majesty, only of Zhongxian. Whenever they see that some matter needs urgent attention or an appointment needs to be made, they always say, "It must be discussed with the eunuch." When a matter cannot be handled or a person appointed, they just explain that the eunuch is not willing. All matters, large and small, in both the palace and the government offices, are decided by Zhongxian alone. . . .

In the tenth year of the first emperor of the dynasty [1377], there was a eunuch who had been in service a long time but carelessly mentioned a governmental matter. The emperor dismissed him that very day and told his officials, "Even though we attribute the fall of the Han and Tang⁶ dynasties to the eunuchs, it was the rulers who made it possible by trusting and loving them. If in the past eunuchs had not commanded troops or participated in politics, they would not have been able to cause disorder no matter what they wanted. This eunuch has admittedly served me a long time, but I cannot overlook his mistake.

Getting rid of him decisively will serve as a warning to those to come." How brilliant! A eunuch who mentioned a governmental matter became a warning for the future. What about Zhongxian who deceives his ruler, recognizes no one above him, and piles up crimes? How can he be left unpunished?

I beg Your Majesty to take courage and thunder forth. Take Zhongxian to the ancestral temple in fetters. Assemble the military and civil officials of all ranks and have the judicial officials interrogate him. Check all the precedents from previous reigns on eunuchs having contacts with the outside, usurping imperial authority, breaking dynastic laws, disrupting court business, alienating the people, and violating the trust of the ruler. Sentence him in a way that will please the gods and satisfy public indignation. . . .

If all this is done and yet Heaven does not show its pleasure, the people do not rejoice, and there is not a new era of peace within the country and at its borders, then I ask that you behead me as an offering to Zhongxian. I am well aware that once my words become known, Zhongxian's clique will detest me, but I am not afraid. If I could get rid of the one person Zhongxian and save Your Majesty's reputation as a Yao and Shun, I would fulfill the command of the former emperor and could face the spirits of all ten of the former [Ming] emperors. My lifetime goal has been to serve loyally. I would not regret having to die as a way of paying back the extraordinary favors I have received during two reigns. I hope Your Majesty recognizes my passion and takes prompt action.

⁵Lady Ke, who had been the emperor's wet nurse, was instrumental in Wei's rise to power and reputedly his lover.

⁶The Han Dynasty ruled China from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.; the Tang, from 618 to 906.

The Tokugawa Formula for Japan



33 ▼ Tokugawa Hidetada, LAWS GOVERNING THE MILITARY HOUSEHOLDS

In 1605, two years after defeating his enemies among the daimyo and becoming shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu resigned the shogunate and conferred the office on his son, Hidetada, to ensure an orderly succession. Ieyasu, however, continued as *de facto* ruler until his death in 1616. In 1615 he issued under his son's name the following code for Japan's warrior aristocrats. Drawn up with the aid of Confucian scholars, it is a succinct statement of the Tokugawa formula for the social and political ills that had caused Japan's disintegration in the sixteenth century.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What provisions of this edict are meant to ensure the shogun's control of the daimyo?
2. Even though the independence of the daimyo was limited by Tokugawa policies, the daimyo still retained certain political powers. How many can be identified in this document?
3. How does the code define the ideal samurai?
4. What sort of social order does the code envision?
5. Where in this document is it possible to detect the influence of Confucian principles?

1. The study of literature and the practice of the military arts, archery and horsemanship, must be cultivated diligently. . . .

From of old the rule has been to practice "the arts of peace on the left hand, and the arts of war on the right"; both must be mastered. Archery and horsemanship are indispensable to military men. Though arms are called instruments of evil, there are times when they must be resorted to. In peacetime we should not be oblivious to the danger of war. Should we not, then, prepare ourselves for it?

2. Drinking parties and wanton revelry should be avoided.

In the codes that have come down to us this kind of dissipation has been severely proscribed.

Sexual indulgence and habitual gambling lead to the downfall of a state.

3. Offenders against the law should not be harbored or hidden in any domain.

Law is the basis of social order. Reason may be violated in the name of the law, but law may not be violated in the name of reason. Those who break the law deserve heavy punishment.

4. Great lords [daimyo], the lesser lords, and officials should immediately expel from their domains any among their retainers or henchmen who have been charged with treason or murder.

Wild and wicked men may become weapons for overturning the state and destroying the people. How can they be allowed to go free?

5. Henceforth no outsider, none but the inhabitants of a particular domain, shall be permitted to reside in that domain.

Each domain has its own ways. If a man discloses the secrets of one's own country to another domain or if the secrets of the other domain are disclosed to one's own, that will sow the seeds of deceit. . . .

6. Whenever it is intended to make repairs on a castle of one of the feudal domains, the [shogunate] should be notified. The construction of any new castles is to be halted and stringently prohibited.

"Big castles are a danger to the state."¹ Walls and moats are the cause of great disorders.

7. Immediate report should be made of innovations which are being planned or of factional conspiracies being formed in neighboring domains.

Men all incline toward partisanship; few are wise and impartial. There are some who refuse to obey their masters, and others who feud with their neighbors.² Why, instead of abiding by the established order, do they wantonly embark upon new schemes?

8. Do not enter into marriage privately [i.e., without notifying the shogunate authorities].

Marriage follows the principle of harmony between yin and yang,³ and must not be entered into lightly. In the *Book of Changes*,⁴ . . . it says, "Marriage should not be contracted out of enmity (against another). Marriages intended to

effect an alliance with enemies [of the state] will turn out badly." The Peach Blossom ode in *The Book of Poetry* also says that "When men and women are proper in their relationships and marriage is arranged at the correct time; then throughout the land there will be no loose women." To form an alliance by marriage is the root of treason.

9. Visits of the daimyo to the capital are to be in accordance with regulations.

The *Chronicles of Japan, continued*⁵ contains a regulation that "Clansmen should not gather together whenever they please, but only when they have to conduct some public business; and also that the number of horsemen serving as an escort in the capital should be limited to twenty. . . ." Daimyo should not be accompanied by a large number of soldiers. Twenty horsemen shall be the maximum escort for daimyo with an income of from one million to two hundred thousand *koku* of rice.⁶ For those with an income of one hundred thousand *koku* or less, the escort should be proportionate to their income. On official missions, however, they may be accompanied by an escort proportionate to their rank.

10. Restrictions on the type and quality of dress to be worn should not be transgressed.

Lord and vassal, superior and inferior, should observe what is proper to their station in life. [Then follows an injunction against the wearing of fine white damask or purple silk by retainers without authorization.]

¹The quotation is a paraphrase from *The Tradition of Tso*, a commentary on *The Spring and Autumn Annals*.

²From the Seventeen Article Constitution of Prince Shotoku (573–621). While serving as regent for his aunt, Empress Suiko, the prince drew up seventeen principles of government designed to strengthen central authority and end disorder. He drew heavily on Confucian principles.

³*Yin* and *yang* are the two fundamental forces, tendencies, or elements in Chinese philosophy that since ancient times have been used to explain change in natural processes of all sorts. *Yin* suggests qualities that are female, weak, dark, cold, and connected with the moon; *yang* suggests qualities that are male, strong, warm, bright, and connected with the sun. Every being and substance contains both elements

in varying proportions. As one of the elements increases within a being or substance, the other decreases but is never eliminated.

⁴*The Book of Changes*, a treatise on divination, and *The Book of Poetry*, a collection of songs, are among the oldest Confucian texts.

⁵*Nihongi, The Chronicles of Japan*, written in 720, is the oldest official history of Japan, covering the mythical age of the gods up to the time of the Empress Jito, who reigned from 686 to 697. This quotation comes from a sequel to *The Chronicles* called the *Shoku nihongi*.

⁶One *koku* equals about five bushels; a person's rank was determined by the amount of rice his lands produced.

11. Persons without rank shall not ride in palanquins.⁷

From of old there have been certain families entitled to ride in palanquins without special permission, and others who have received such permission. Recently, however, even the ordinary retainers and henchmen of some families have taken to riding about in palanquins, which is truly the worst sort of presumption. Henceforth permission shall be granted only to the lords of the various domains, their close relatives and ranking officials, medical men and astrologers, those over sixty years of age, and those ill or infirm. In the cases of ordinary household retainers or henchmen who willfully ride in palanquins, their masters shall be held accountable.

Exceptions to this law are the court families, Buddhist prelates, and the clergy in general.

12. The samurai of the various domains shall lead a frugal and simple life.

When the rich make a display of their wealth, the poor are humiliated and envious. Nothing engenders corruption so much as this, and therefore it must be strictly curbed.

13. The lords of the domains should select officials with a capacity for public administration.

Good government depends on getting the right men. Due attention should be given to their merits and faults; rewards and punishments must be properly meted out. If a domain has able men, it flourishes; if it lacks able men it is doomed to perish. This is the clear admonition of the wise men of old.

⁷Enclosed carriages, usually for one person, borne on the shoulders of carriers by means of poles.

Europeans in East and Southeast Asia

The Europeans' early impact on East and Southeast Asia varied from their conquest and domination of the Philippines to their rejection and expulsion from Japan. After several false starts the Spaniards subjugated the major Philippine islands between 1565 and 1571, established a regime modeled on New Spain in the Americas, and undertook the conversion of Filipinos to Catholicism. This was far different from the Europeans' experience in Japan, where their century-long presence as traders and missionaries ended in the 1630s when the shogun expelled all Europeans and decreed that only one Dutch ship a year would be permitted to trade with Japan at the tiny island of Deshima in Nagasaki Harbor. The shogun's seriousness was underscored by the experience of two Portuguese envoys who came to Japan in 1640 to petition for the reopening of trade and were promptly executed.

The rest of the region had experiences that fell somewhere between those of Japan and the Philippines. The Chinese treated the newly arrived Europeans like all other foreigners who sought trade and diplomatic relations with the Central Kingdom. Europeans would have to recognize China's superiority and realize that trade with China could take place only at the pleasure of the emperor and according to his rules. The Portuguese at first had trouble abiding by these rules, so the Chinese expelled them in 1522 and allowed them back only after restrict-

ing their commercial activity to the small peninsula of Macao, some seventy miles from Guongzhou. European trade with China continued but did not grow appreciably until the eighteenth century.

A small number of Chinese showed an interest in European culture and were attracted to Christianity. Jesuit fathers, learned in European mathematics and science, were welcomed to the emperor's court as long as they honored Confucius, wore Chinese garb, and assumed an attitude of subservience to the emperor. With their activities tolerated by the emperors, Catholic missionaries managed to convert several hundred thousand Chinese to Christianity by the late 1600s. In the eighteenth century, however, emperors and their officials took umbrage at the refusal of many non-Jesuit clergy to accommodate themselves to Chinese thought and practices. In the 1720s the suppression of Christianity began.

No area had more variety in its dealings with Europeans than Southeast Asia. In Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos, European impact was limited to small trading posts in no more than a dozen ports and an even smaller number of religious missions. In the so-called Spice Islands of modern Indonesia and in Malaysia, the Portuguese burst on the scene with their conquest of Malacca in 1511 and their establishment of fortified trading posts in other locations. Their thrust into the region soon stalled, however, and their dream of establishing a commercial monopoly was never realized. Their missionary efforts also foundered. Conversions were rare and, paradoxically, Portuguese aggressiveness might have even strengthened Islam, which came to be viewed as a symbol of resistance to the Europeans. The Netherlands, which became the dominant European power in the East Indies during the seventeenth century, established tighter control of the spice trade and displaced native rulers in Java and the Moluccas. But until the end of the 1600s, even the well-organized and single-minded Dutch were simply another new participant in the region's age-old patterns of commercial rivalry and politics.

The Seclusion of Japan



34 ▼ *Tokugawa Iemitsu,* *CLOSED COUNTRY EDICT OF 1635*

For close to a century Japan was the most spectacular European success story in Asia. Portuguese traders and missionaries began visiting Japan regularly in the 1540s, and the Spanish, Dutch, and English soon followed. The Japanese were fascinated by European goods such as eyeglasses and clocks and were quick to appreciate the military potential of European firearms and artillery. Some even adopted European dress. Daimyo on the island of Kyushu in southwestern Japan actively competed for European trade by tolerating the activities of Catholic missionaries and in a few cases converting to Christianity themselves. Oda Nobunaga, the military leader who unified approximately half of Japan in the 1570s and 1580s, encouraged the activities of Catholic missionaries in order to weaken his

rivals, the powerful and wealthy Buddhist monasteries. Nobunaga's tolerance of missionary activity led to numerous conversions in the district of Kyoto, Japan's capital city. By the early seventeenth century approximately five hundred thousand Japanese had become Christians.

By then, however, anti-European sentiment was growing. Nobunaga's successor, Hideyoshi, became suspicious of Europeans after the Spaniards conquered the Philippines, and he began to question the loyalty of daimyo who had become Christians. In 1597 he ordered the crucifixion of nine Catholic missionaries and seventeen Japanese converts. The early Tokugawa shoguns, in their single-minded pursuit of stability and order, also feared the subversive potential of Christianity. They quickly moved to obliterate it, even at the expense of isolating Japan and severely limiting commercial contacts with China, Southeast Asia, and Europe.

Japan's isolation policy was fully implemented by Tokugawa Iemitsu, Ieyasu's grandson and shogun from 1623 to 1651. His edicts essentially closed Japan to all foreigners and prevented his subjects from leaving Japan. The following document, the most famous of Iemitsu's exclusion edicts, is directed to the two commissioners of Nagasaki, a port city in southern Japan and a center of Christianity.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What steps are to be taken to suppress Christianity?
2. How are commercial dealings with foreigners to be handled before they are ended altogether?
3. In what ways did the edict affect the shogun's Japanese subjects?
4. Does trade or Christianity seem to have been the greater threat to Japan according to the edict?

1. Japanese ships are strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries.

2. No Japanese is permitted to go abroad. If there is anyone who attempts to do so secretly, he must be executed. The ship so involved must be impounded and its owner arrested, and the matter must be reported to the higher authority.

3. If any Japanese returns from overseas after residing there, he must be put to death.

4. If there is any place where the teachings of the [Catholic] priests is practiced, the two of you must order a thorough investigation.

5. Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of the priests must be rewarded

accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking priest, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver. For those of lower ranks, depending on the deed, the reward must be set accordingly.

6. If a foreign ship has an objection (to the measures adopted) and it becomes necessary to report the matter to Edo,¹ you may ask the Omura² domain to provide ships to guard the foreign ship. . . .

7. If there are any Southern Barbarians³ who propagate the teachings of the priests, or otherwise commit crimes, they may be incarcerated in the prison. . . .

¹Modern Tokyo, the seat of the Tokugawa government.

²The area around the city of Nagasaki.

³Westerners.

8. All incoming ships must be carefully searched for the followers of the priests.

9. No single trading city shall be permitted to purchase all the merchandise brought by foreign ships.

10. Samurai⁴ are not permitted to purchase any goods originating from foreign ships directly from Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.

11. After a list of merchandise brought by foreign ships is sent to Edo, as before you may order that commercial dealings may take place without waiting for a reply from Edo.

12. After settling the price, all white yarns⁵ brought by foreign ships shall be allocated to the five trading cities⁶ and other quarters as stipulated.

13. After settling the price of white yarns, other merchandise [brought by foreign ships] may be traded freely between the [licensed] dealers. However, in view of the fact that Chinese ships are small and cannot bring large consignments, you may issue orders of sale at your discretion. Additionally, payment for goods pur-

chased must be made within twenty days after the price is set.

14. The date of departure homeward of foreign ships shall not be later than the twentieth day of the ninth month. Any ships arriving in Japan later than usual shall depart within fifty days of their arrival. As to the departure of Chinese ships, you may use your discretion to order their departure after the departure of the Portuguese *galeota*.⁷

15. The goods brought by foreign ships which remained unsold may not be deposited or accepted for deposit.

16. The arrival in Nagasaki of representatives of the five trading cities shall not be later than the fifth day of the seventh month. Anyone arriving later than that date shall lose the quota assigned to his city.

17. Ships arriving in Hirado⁸ must sell their raw silk at the price set in Nagasaki, and are not permitted to engage in business transactions until after the price is established in Nagasaki.

⁴Members of Japan's military aristocracy.

⁵Raw silk.

⁶The cities of Kyoto, Edo, Osaka, Sakai, and Nagasaki.

⁷A galleon, an ocean-going Portuguese ship.

⁸A small island in southwest Japan, not far from Nagasaki.

Siamese-Dutch Tensions in the Seventeenth Century



35 ▼ LETTER TO THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Dutch, having won their political independence from Spain at the close of the sixteenth century, immediately and aggressively entered the competition for profits in Asia. This meant the end of the commercial empire of Portugal, which lacked the wealth and organization to maintain its position against the Dutch East India Company, a joint stock company founded in 1602 and backed by the Dutch government, which had ample capital, military muscle, and a board of directors in Amsterdam (known as "the Seventeen") that controlled its operations. The fall of Malacca to the Dutch in 1641 ended the Portuguese empire in Southeast Asia except on the island of Timor, which the Portuguese held until the twentieth century. The Dutch also took political control of Java and the

Moluccas and defeated or weakened regional challengers such as the kingdom of Aceh.

As the following document shows, however, even with their wealth and organization, the Dutch still needed to cultivate good relations with the region's rulers to be successful. This letter was written by an agent of the Dutch East India Company stationed in Jakarta to the Seventeen in 1655. He expressed his concern about a diplomatic problem with the king of Siam (modern Thailand) and its implications for Dutch trade and prestige. Siam, with its capital to the north of Bangkok in Ayutthaya, was the strongest monarchy in Southeast Asia, with leaders who were skillful in playing off one European power against another. What prompted the letter was Siamese anger over the recent Dutch blockade of Tennasserim, a city in a Siamese vassal state on the Bay of Bengal, and the refusal of the Dutch to help the Siamese king suppress a rebellion in Singgora, another vassal state on the Bay of Siam.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How would you characterize Siamese attitudes toward the Dutch?
2. How did the Dutch resident Westerwolt react when the Siamese court became antagonistic toward the Dutch? What does his behavior reveal about Dutch attitudes toward the Siamese?
3. According to the author and the views of Westerwolt he describes, how might the Dutch be weakened by their disfavor with the king?
4. How in the short run did the Dutch try to solve their problems with the unhappy Siamese king?
5. What does the document reveal about the competition the Dutch were facing from the English in Southeast Asia?

It appears that the merchant Hendrich Craijer Zalr had promised, so they¹ say, 20 ships, which was a very rash proceeding on his part, and thereupon they made the above-mentioned expedition, which they said, if our support did not appear, would be obliged to return unsuccessful and with shame and dishonor to the crown, as was actually the case. Moreover, it happened that a writing had come unexpectedly from the governor of Tennasserim that two Dutch ships had held the harbor there for 2 months, and had prevented the entrance and departure of foreign trad-

ers, which caused great annoyance in Siam, especially at Court, and embittered everyone against us. This gave the Companies² very favorable opportunity to blacken us and to make us odious to everyone, and to change the King's feeble opposition into open enmity, the more so since the news has from time to time been confirmed and assured, and no one there doubts it any longer.

Wherefore the resident Westerwolt,³ who was convinced of the contrary, since he would certainly have been informed before any such action

¹Refers to the Siamese royal court.

²The British East India Company; it is unclear why the plural is used.

³The resident agent of the Dutch East India Company at the Siamese royal court.

was taken, finally found himself obliged to ask that certain persons, on the King's behalf and on his own, should be deputed and sent overland to Tennasserim, in order to discover on the spot the truth of the case, which request was granted by the King, and on our behalf the junior merchant, Hugo van Crujlenburgh was sent.

Meanwhile the aforementioned resident Westerwolt had on various occasions made complaint of the bad and unreasonable treatment received, but got nothing by it but a summons to court, and before four Ojas or councilors was questioned on certain points to which he had to answer forthwith, and the answer was written down word for word, to be laid before the King, who sat by and waited, and every now and then asked whether one of the questions had yet been put. So that the resident was in very great embarrassment and did not know whether even his life was any longer safe. These questions were for the most part on the subject of the help asked for against Singgora, the Siamese professing to have gone to war with the Spanish on our account, and to have suffered much damage in the same, and that we now refused to assist his Majesty against the rebels with ships and men; whereas the beforementioned merchant, Hendrich Craijer, had definitely made him such promises. Therefore he [the king] had sent his forces to Ligor so as to cooperate with him [Craijer] on his arrival and keep his word: But instead we had sent our ships to Tennasserim and had taken possession of the place in order to keep foreigners away and to ruin their trade. In consequence of this inquiry Westerwolt was inclined to depart from Siam and so make an end of this business, as he had sometimes proposed to do, and as there were two of our ships lying ready at the bar . . . he thought he could initiate and carry his proposal into execution, but was warned that

no living soul would escape the power of the King since he could kill them all and trample them under foot and that his threats [of departing] were not at all to the purpose.

For all which reasons the aforesaid resident could not answer the questions put to him without embarrassment: And nothing followed thereon, except that four or five days later a prohibition was published that, for the future, neither Siamese nor Peguers⁴ were to be allowed to serve the Dutch, thus putting great contempt upon the nation. From all which contemptuous proceedings the above-mentioned Westerwolt came to the conclusion that in case the long expected help could not be sent this year we should have trouble in Siam; also that this same year the Japanese cargoes were likely to be unimportant, even if he were allowed to ship and dispatch them. This gave us no small concern, for now, in addition to the war with Portugal, we had come to a rupture with the new government in England,⁵ and it still continued impossible for us to spare any force in ships or men for Siam, and it was also inadvisable to continue to keep the King any longer in an uncertain hope, whereby our cause could only be made worse the longer it lasted, since it was quite uncertain whether we in the near future should have the power to help him. Besides it is not the Company's function nor does it agree with its maxims to interpose itself in the wars of foreign potentates over questions and quarrels which do not concern it in the least.

Nevertheless, it was decided and considered necessary to send thither at least one good flyboat⁶ to take the cargo for Japan,⁷ if it were allowed, or, in case of refusal, to sail to Taiwan, in order to return hither at its proper time with sugar. For which purpose the aforesaid *Crowned Charity* was again employed, departing on the

⁴A city in modern Myanmar (Burma), then a vassal state of Siam.

⁵Actually, the first Anglo-Dutch War, fought over English efforts to block Dutch ships from entering English ports, had ended in 1654, but the news seems not to have reached the author.

⁶A small sea-going vessel for carrying cargo.

⁷The Dutch were the only traders allowed in Japan after the Japanese seclusion acts of the 1630s. There was some question in the author's mind about how strictly they were being enforced.

21st May from this roadstead with a letter and a handsome present to the King, also one to the Oja Zebartiban above mentioned, in answer to his [letter] written to us from Ligor: In which we have made known clearly and definitely our inability to send assistance, and that it was impossible to say when it could be sent on account of the wars referred to above. That so his Majesty should therefore no longer wait for it and

that we should be freed from the vexations which would otherwise probably be renewed every year. We have also sent on the 5th September the ship *Schiedam* in order that, all being well, it should return hither at once, laden with rice, sapan wood⁸ and other necessities, or if it can get no cargo, to sail to the Moluccas and bring us thence as much pepper as it can take in. . . .

⁸A Southeast Asian wood that yields a red dye.

Part Two



A World of Transformation and Tradition, from the Mid Seventeenth to Early Nineteenth Century

Two themes — growing tension between innovation and tradition, and greater interaction among human societies — stand out in world history from the mid seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Neither theme was new. Except for a few rare exceptions, groups of human beings throughout history had interacted with one another through conquest, trade, missionary activity, migration, travel, and the exchange of ideas and technology. In part for this very reason the need to balance the conflicting claims of tradition and innovation had also been a frequent challenge for past societies. But from the mid 1600s to the early 1800s interaction among the world's peoples was increasingly global rather than local or regional, and the forces of change were more profound and intense, more threatening to old ways, and less avoidable.

The conflict between change and tradition was most pronounced in Europe and its offshoots in the Americas. In the realm of ideas, intellectuals abandoned much of the heritage of medieval and Renaissance Europe and formulated views of society, morality, and human nature that were increasingly secular and scientific. In politics, revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic challenged royal authority, aristocratic privilege, and state-controlled churches, and sought a new political order based on popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, legal equality, and freedom. In economics, the Atlantic assumed ever-greater importance in world trade, while in Europe population growth, urbanization, commercial expansion, and greater productivity in agriculture and manufacturing further undermined the traditional feudal-agrarian order. As the century progressed, the mechanization of the English textile and iron industries heralded an even more profound transformation in human affairs, the Industrial Revolution.

The clash between innovation and tradition was not limited to Europe and the Americas, however. In Russia a deep division opened between those who supported the Westernizing efforts of Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725) and Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796) and those who sought to preserve the essentials of traditional Russian culture and religion. In the Ottoman Empire

advocates of military and political reform clashed with religious leaders and defenders of the status quo. In Japan, new intellectual currents, economic growth, and urbanization weakened the foundations of the Tokugawa regime, while in China Manchu rule brought inevitable changes and adjustments.

The subjugation of China by the Manchus, subsequent Chinese expansion into central Asia, and further Russian expansion into Siberia are all examples of growing interaction among the world's peoples through conquest. But the main cause of globalization was Europe's continuing commercial and political expansion. Through migration and internal growth the number of Europeans in the Americas swelled, and in their churches, universities, political institutions, social mores, racial attitudes, and much else, they transplanted European practices and perspectives to the Western Hemisphere. The growing importance of the Americas as a market for European manufactured goods and as a source for agricultural products and raw materials led to increased transatlantic trade, which in the eighteenth century included more than six million Africans who were sold into slavery in the Americas.

Europeans also intensified their involvement in Asia. During the 1600s, the Dutch drove Portuguese traders from Southeast Asia and established political control over the island of Java. By the late eighteenth century the British ruled the Indian state of Bengal, were flooding the Chinese market with opium, and were pressuring the Chinese government to open more ports to foreign trade. Europeans in the late 1700s also began to explore, exploit, and settle New Zealand, Australia, and other islands of the South Pacific, bringing the world's last isolated region into global patterns of political influence, cultural interchange, and commerce. More so than at any time in history, isolation among the world's peoples was melting away.

Chapter 8

Europe and the Americas in an Age of Science, Economic Growth, and Revolution

On October 24, 1648, the work of hundreds of diplomats and dozens of heads of state finally came to an end when signatures were affixed to the last agreements that collectively make up the Treaty of Westphalia, named after the northwest German territory where negotiations had taken place for the previous six years. With this, one of Europe's most devastating and demoralizing wars, the Thirty Years' War, finally ended. In no small measure because of this war's horrors and destructiveness, this was the last European war in which religious antagonism played a significant role. After a century of attempting to exterminate their religious enemies with armies, the executioner's axe, and instruments of the torture chamber, Europeans came to accept the permanence of Europe's Protestant-Catholic divisions.

Religion was not the only area in which tensions eased in the second half of the seventeenth century. In politics, Louis XIV of France (r. 1643–1715) and his much-imitated residence at Versailles symbolized the continentwide triumph of absolutist monarchs over rebellious nobles and independent-minded cities and provinces. In only a handful of states, including the Netherlands and England, were wealthy landowners and merchants able to strengthen representative assemblies and limit royal authority. In these states too,

however, conflicts over fundamental constitutional issues were resolved.

An end of uncertainty also took place in the realm of ideas. The work of Isaac Newton (1642–1727) settled perplexing scientific issues that had emerged in the sixteenth century when Nicholas Copernicus and others revealed the flaws of ancient Greek science but sought in vain for a coherent, all-encompassing model to replace it. Newton's theory of universal gravitation provided such a model. It enabled scientists to understand a host of natural phenomena, including the Earth's tides, the acceleration of falling bodies, and lunar and planetary movement. The broad acceptance of Newton's theories along with advances in mathematics and other branches of science encouraged a belief in the powers of human reason and inspired the secularism of Europe's Age of Enlightenment.

Building on late-seventeenth-century foundations, Europe was more civil, more orderly, and more tranquil in the eighteenth century than it had been in hundreds of years. Wars were fought, but with military discipline tightened, religious tensions eased, and pitched battles rare, none matched the devastation of the Reformation era's religious wars. Steady economic growth, much of it fueled by trade with the Americas, modest inflation, and greater agricultural productivity increased per capita wealth in Europe's expanding population. Peasant revolts and urban violence declined, and old class antagonisms seemed to have abated.

The Atlantic community's outward tranquility was deceptive, however. One does not have to look far below the surface to see tensions that led to anticolonial revolts in the Americas and revolutions in France and other European states at century's end. A host of issues — commercial, political, and ideological — increasingly divided the governments of Spain and Great Britain from colonists across the Atlantic who now considered themselves more American than European. In Europe too discontent was growing. Peasants, who as always were taxed to their limit and beyond, now faced land shortages and higher rents as a result of rural population growth. Artisans felt pinched by decades of gradual inflation. Merchants, manufacturers, lawyers, and other members of the upper middle class prospered, but they resented the nobles' privileges and their rulers' ineptitude.

Their resentment, especially in France, was justified. While promoting themselves as defenders of liberty against royal tyranny, French nobles selfishly protected their privileges and tax exemptions even at the cost of bankrupting the state.

Faced with spiraling deficits, Louis XV (r. 1715–1774) pursued his pleasures, and Louis XVI (r. 1774–1792) embraced then abandoned one solution after another. The intellectual atmosphere of the Age of Enlightenment, which fostered a belief in reason and progress, heightened political expectations, as did recent events in North America, where between 1776 and 1783 the thirteen colonies threw off British rule and established a new government based on constitutionalism and popular sovereignty. The meeting of the moribund French representative assembly, the Estates-General, in May 1789 was the first step toward a revolution in France that reverberated throughout Europe and ultimately affected every corner of the globe.

In England another revolution, an economic revolution, was also underway by century's end. The adoption of new spinning and weaving devices driven by water power and steam was transforming the textile industry, while new methods of smelting and casting brought fundamental changes to the production of iron. As guilds and domestic industry gave way to factory production, output soared, urban populations swelled, and work was redefined. These economic changes, collectively known as the Industrial Revolution, even more than the political revolution in France, reshaped the human condition.

Science, Reason, and Progress

A series of remarkable scientific breakthroughs changed European thought during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Science or, as it was known at the time, natural philosophy, was nothing new for Europeans. Medieval and Renaissance scholars had sought to understand the natural world, but their need to make science conform to Catholic theology and their conviction that virtually everything worth knowing in science had already been discovered by the ancients discouraged speculation and hampered new discoveries.

The first major break from ancient science was made by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus, who, in his *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (1543), theorized that the sun, not the Earth, was the center of the observable universe. By the time of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), whose discussion of science and religion can be found in Chapter 4, most scientists accepted Copernican heliocentrism, even though it raised perplexing theoretical questions. Most of these questions were answered by Isaac Newton (1642–1727), whose *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1687) explained planetary and earthly motion through the universal law of gravitation. This law stated that every object, large or small,

exerts a force on every other object directly proportional to the product of the two masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. Newton's discoveries provided a coherent alternative to the discredited Greek scientific model and fully revealed the power of a new scientific method based on observation, experiment, and mathematical analysis.

The Scientific Revolution was the major inspiration for the Enlightenment, the dominant intellectual movement of eighteenth-century Europe. Centered in France and led by intellectuals who called themselves *philosophes* (French for philosophers), the Enlightenment popularized and glorified science and proclaimed that human reason could be applied to social, political, and economic problems with results as spectacular as those achieved by Galileo and Newton in their study of nature. Freed from religious opinion and ancient authority, reason, so the *philosophes* claimed, could expose the weaknesses, errors, flaws, and injustices inherited from the past.

The *philosophes* were social and political critics, known for their condemnation of their era's legal codes, schools, churches, government policies, slave trade, wars, sexual mores, class privileges, and much else. The Enlightenment was not, however, purely negative. The *philosophes* rejected passive acceptance of the status quo, and proclaimed that human beings through reason could plot and achieve a better future. They disagreed about what that future would be like, but none doubted that improvement of the human condition was not just possible, but inevitable, if only reason were given freedom to inquire, question, plan, and inspire.

The Promise of Science



36 ▼ *Francis Bacon, NEW ORGANON*

Along with the Frenchman René Descartes (1596–1650), the English thinker Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was instrumental in formulating the strategies and methods of the new science. Both men rejected the medieval and Renaissance doctrine that scientific truth was attained by the careful study and analysis of authoritative texts from antiquity. Descartes, a superb mathematician and an advocate of the deductive method, stated in his *Discourse on Method* (1637) that humans could find scientific truth by carefully drawing conclusions from a few general, self-evident propositions. Bacon, a proponent of the inductive method, believed that experiment, observation, and the collection of data would reveal nature's laws. In his view, only after scientists had studied many individual phenomena could they generalize about the laws of nature. He also believed that by understanding nature humans would have the power to use and control it for the betterment of their condition.

Bacon's *New Organon* (1620), or "New Method of Inquiry," was meant to replace the "old organon," which refers to the "old method of inquiry" based on the system of logic devised by Aristotle. Written in Latin, and hence directed to a learned audience, *New Organon* consists of 130 aphorisms — concise statements

of principles — that summarize Bacon's views on scientific knowledge and its potential.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Bacon see as the major impediments to scientific progress?
2. According to Bacon, what are the roles of experiment, mathematics, and technology in scientific generalization?
3. What does Bacon mean when he says that a scientist must be like a bee rather than an ant or a spider?
4. What role in the future of humanity does Bacon see for science?
5. How do Bacon's concerns about potential roadblocks to scientific progress differ from those of Galileo (Chapter 4, source 10)?

1. Man, being the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature: beyond this he neither knows anything nor can do anything.

2. Neither the naked hand nor the understanding left to itself can effect much. It is by instruments and helps that the work is done, which are as much wanted for the understanding as for the hand. And as the instruments of the hand either give motion or guide it, so the instruments of the mind supply either suggestions for the understanding or cautions.

3. Human knowledge and human power meet in one; for where the cause is not known the effect cannot be produced. Nature to be commanded must be obeyed; and that which in contemplation is as the cause is in operation as the rule. . . .

8. Even the works already known are due to chance and experiment rather than to sciences; for the sciences we now possess are merely systems for the peculiar arrangements and setting forth of things already invented; not methods of invention or directions for new works.

9. The cause and root of nearly all evils in the sciences is this — that while we falsely admire

and extol the powers of the human mind we neglect to seek for its true helps. . . .

19. There are and can be only two ways of searching into and discovering truth. The one flies from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms, and from these principles, the truth of which it takes for settled and immovable, proceeds to judgment and to the discovery of middle axioms. And this way is now in fashion. The other derives axioms from the senses and particulars, rising by a gradual and unbroken ascent, so that it arrives at the most general axioms last of all. This is the true way, but as yet untried. . . .

22. Both ways set out from the senses and particulars, and rest in the highest generalities; but the difference between them is infinite. For the one just glances at experiment and particulars in passing, the other dwells duly and orderly among them. The one, again, begins at once by establishing certain abstract and useless generalities, the other rises by gradual steps to that which is prior and better known in the order of nature. . . .

31. It is idle to expect any great advancement in science from the superinducing¹ and engrafting of new things upon old. We must begin anew

¹To introduce a concept over and above some already existing concept.

from the very foundations, unless we would revolve for ever in a circle with mean and contemptible progress. . . .

36. One method of delivery alone remains to us; which is simply this: we must lead men to the particulars themselves, and their series and order; while men on their side must force themselves for a while to lay their notions by and begin to familiarize themselves with facts. . . .

95. Those who have handled sciences have been either men of experiment or men of dogmas. The men of experiment are like the ant; they only collect and use: the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course; it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy; for it neither relies solely or chiefly on the powers of the mind, nor does it take the matter which it gathers from natural history and mechanical experiments and lay it up in the memory whole, as it finds it; but lays it up in the understanding altered and digested. Therefore from a closer and purer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational, (such as has never yet been made) much may be hoped. . . .

108. So much then for the removing of despair and the raising of hope through the dismissal or rectification of the errors of past time. We must now see what else there is to ground hope upon. And this consideration occurs at once — that if many useful discoveries have been made by accident or upon occasion, when men were not seeking for them but were busy about other things; no one can doubt but that when they apply themselves to seek and make this their business, and that too by method and in order and not by desultory impulses, they will discover far more.

109. Another argument of hope may be drawn from this, — that some of the inventions already known are such as before they were discovered it

could hardly have entered any man's head to think of; they would have been simply set aside as impossible. . . .

If, for instance, before the invention of ordnance,² a man had described the thing by its effects, and said that there was a new invention, by means of which the strongest towers and walls could be shaken and thrown down at a great distance; men would doubtless have begun to think over all the ways of multiplying the force of catapults and mechanical engines by weights and wheels and such machinery for ramming and projecting; but the notion of a fiery blast suddenly and violently expanding and exploding would hardly have entered into any man's imagination or fancy. . . .

In the same way, if before the discovery of silk, any one had said that there was a kind of thread discovered for the purposes of dress and furniture, which far surpassed the thread of linen or of wool in fineness and at the same time in strength, and also in beauty and softness; men would have begun immediately to think of some silky kind of vegetable, or of the finer hair of some animal, or of the feathers and down of birds; but of a web woven by a tiny worm, and that in such abundance, and renewing itself yearly, they would assuredly never have thought. Nay, if any one had said anything about a worm, he would no doubt have been laughed at as dreaming of a new kind of cobwebs.

So again, if before the discovery of the magnet, any one had said that a certain instrument had been invented by means of which the quarters and points of the heavens could be taken and distinguished with exactness; men would have been carried by their imagination to a variety of conjectures concerning the more exquisite construction of astronomical instruments; but that anything could be discovered agreeing so well in its movements with the heavenly bodies, and yet not a heavenly body itself, but simply a substance of metal or stone, would have been judged altogether incredible. . . .

²Cannon and artillery.

There is therefore much ground for hoping that there are still laid up in the womb of nature many secrets of excellent use, having no affinity or parallelism with any thing that is now known, but lying entirely out of the common track of our imagination, which have not yet been found out.

They too no doubt will some time or other, in the course and revolution of many ages, come to light of themselves, just as the others did; only by the method of which we are now treating they can be speedily and suddenly and simultaneously presented and anticipated.

Two Images of Seventeenth-Century Science



37 ▼ *Sébastien Le Clerc,* *THE ROYAL ACADEMY AND ITS* *PROTECTORS and A DISSECTION* *AT THE JARDIN DES PLANTES*

The most significant institutional development in Europe's scientific revolution was the foundation of scientific societies, sanctioned and usually supported by royalty, and whose membership included most of the leading scientists of the day. The four most prestigious academies were the Academy of Experiments (f. 1657), located in Florence and supported by Prince Leopold de Medici; the Royal Society of London (f. 1660), licensed but not financially supported by Charles II; the French Royal Academy of Sciences (f. 1661), lavishly supported by Louis XIV; and the Berlin Academy of Sciences (f. 1700), created under the auspices of King Frederick I of Brandenburg-Prussia. Although these academies varied in size and differed in their organization and activities, they all encouraged scientific investigation, rewarded successful researchers, and disseminated their members' observations and discoveries through the publication of books and journals.

Many Europeans were introduced to the ideals and goals of the French Royal Academy of Sciences through the engravings of Sébastien Le Clerc (1637–1714), a gifted artist with a lifelong interest in mathematics and science. He made the engravings for many of the Academy's books and set a new standard for accurate scientific illustration. He also completed a series of engravings depicting the activities of the academicians. These engravings appeared in several of the Academy's publications, with individual copies made for the king, interested courtiers, and collectors. Two of them are reproduced here.

The first, *The Royal Academy and Its Protectors* (1671), centers on Louis XIV, with two high nobles, the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Orléans, to his right and Colbert, the French controller general of finance, to his left. They are surrounded by members of the Academy and their scientific instruments. Through the window is seen a formal garden and the Royal Observatory, which is under construction. The second engraving is titled *A Dissection at the Jardin des Plantes* (1671). At the center two academicians are dissecting a fox, with their observations being recorded by the individual seated to their right. In the foreground Charles Perrault, a member of the Academy, points to a printed book where this



Sébastien Le Clerc, The Royal Academy and Its Protectors



Sébastien Le Clerc, A Dissection at the Jardin des Plantes

information will be published, and behind the table stands Le Clerc himself, who is displaying a page of his scientific engravings. On the far left two figures are making observations with a magnifying glass and microscope, and on the right stand Colbert and another courtier.

Neither engraving is realistic. Louis XIV did not visit the Academy until 1681, ten years after *The Royal Academy and Its Protectors* was completed. And none of the Academy's rooms would have afforded a window view of the Royal Observatory. Furthermore, the room where dissections were carried out was notoriously rank, probably closer in appearance to a butcher shop than the genteel scene portrayed by Le Clerc. The artist's goal, however, was not to depict the day-to-day reality of the Academy's activities but to communicate an idealized vision of its methods and purposes.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How many different pieces of scientific equipment can you identify in the engravings? What does the equipment and other paraphernalia reveal about the scientific interests and methodology of the academicians?
2. What is the significance of the picture toward which Colbert is pointing? What might be the significance of the map that lays on the floor?
3. What point is Le Clerc trying to make about the Academy in the following details from the engraving of the dissection room: the two figures at the window, the figure pointing to the book, and the artist pointing to the page of engravings.
4. Note the formal gardens that can be seen through the windows in both engravings. What attitude toward nature is implied in gardens such as these? How does this view of nature compare with the impression given in the Chinese paintings in source 31?

An Affirmation of Human Progress



38 ▼ *Marquis de Condorcet,* *SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS* *OF THE HUMAN MIND*

Throughout history most human beings have valued tradition and resisted change. Reform of governments, religious institutions, and social relationships was deemed possible, but it typically did not mean going forward to institute something new but going back to recapture features of a lost golden age. Serious thinkers who studied the past and contemplated the future concluded that the human condition had always been more or less the same, or that history ran in cycles, or that it was the story of gradual decline from a mythological state of perfection. Only in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did intellectuals and much

of the general populace come to believe that the past was a burden and that human beings could effect changes in their condition that were beneficial, not destructive. In a word, people began to believe in progress.

The West's belief in progress can be traced back to the eighteenth century when during the Age of Enlightenment many thinkers became convinced that well-intentioned human beings could employ reason to erase at least some of the cruelties, superstitions, and prejudices that diminished the human condition. By the end of the eighteenth century some went further and developed a theory of human progress that saw humanity ascending from ignorance and darkness to a utopian future. The most famous prophet of progress was the Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794), a mathematician, philosopher, and educational reformer. He supported the French Revolution but, like many moderates, fell afoul of the radical Jacobins and was forced to go into hiding in July 1793. It was then he wrote his *Sketch of the Progress of the Human Mind*, which traces human progress in ten stages from the dawn of history to the French Revolution and into the future. Having completed his work in March 1794, he emerged from hiding, was arrested immediately, and was found dead the next morning of unknown causes.

The following excerpts come from “The Ninth Stage,” in which he discusses developments from the mid seventeenth century to the beginning of the French Revolution, and “The Tenth Stage,” in which he describes the future.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What factors, according to Condorcet, have impeded progress in the past?
2. According to Condorcet, scientific achievement was the outstanding feature of humanity's “ninth stage.” In what ways did science in this era change human thinking and affect human society?
3. Condorcet is not proud of the Europeans' record in dealing with the peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. What groups does he blame for the Europeans' unenlightened behavior in these regions?
4. Why is Condorcet confident that Europeans will modify their behavior in Asia and Africa? What will be the result? Does Condorcet show any interest in preserving the customs and beliefs of the Asians and Africans?
5. What in Condorcet's view caused the oppression of women in the past? Why does he reject such oppression, and what positive results in his view will result from ending it?
6. What role will technology play in humanity's tenth stage? How are Condorcet's views on this issue similar to those expressed by Francis Bacon (source 36)?

NINTH EPOCH

*From Descartes to the
Formation of the French Republic*

Until now we have demonstrated the progress of philosophy only in those men who have cultivated, deepened, and perfected it: it now remains to reveal what have been its effects on general opinion, and how reason, while ascending at last to a sure method of discovering and recognizing truth, learned how to preserve itself from the errors into which respect for authority and the imagination have often dragged it: at the same time it destroyed within the general mass of people the prejudices that have afflicted and corrupted the human race for so long a time.

Humanity was finally permitted to boldly proclaim the long ignored right to submit every opinion to reason, that is, to utilize the only instrument given to us for grasping and recognizing the truth. Each human learned with a sort of pride that nature had never destined him to believe the word of others. The superstitions of antiquity and the abasement of reason before the madness of supernatural religion disappeared from society just as they had disappeared from philosophy. . . .

If we were to limit ourselves to showing the benefits derived from the immediate applications of the sciences, or in their applications to man-made devices for the well-being of individuals and the prosperity of nations, we would be making known only a slim part of their benefits. The most important, perhaps, is having destroyed prejudices and re-established human intelligence, which until then had been forced to bend down to false instructions instilled in it by absurd beliefs passed on to the children of each generation by the terrors of superstition and the fear of tyranny. . . .

The advances of scientific knowledge are all the more deadly to these errors because they destroy them without appearing to attack them, while lavishing on those who stubbornly defend them the degrading taunt of ignorance. . . .

Finally this progress of scientific knowledge, which neither the passions nor self-interest is going to disturb, results in a belief that not birth, professional status, or social standing gives anyone the right to judge something he does not understand. This unstoppable progress cannot be observed without having enlightened men search unceasingly for ways to make the other branches of learning follow the same path. It offers them at every step a model to follow, according to which they will be able to judge their own efforts and recognize false paths on which they have embarked. It protects them from skepticism, credulity, blind caution, and even exaggerated submission to the knowledgeable and famous. . . .

TENTH EPOCH

The Future Progress of the Human Mind

Our hopes for the future of the human species may be reduced to three important points: the destruction of inequality among nations; the progress of equality within nations themselves; and finally, the real improvement of humanity. Should not all the nations of the world approach one day the state of civilization reached by the most enlightened peoples such as the French and the Anglo-Americans? Will not the slavery of nations subjected to kings, the barbarity of African tribes, and the ignorance of savages gradually disappear? Are there on the globe countries whose very nature has condemned them never to enjoy liberty and never exercise their reason? . . .

If we cast an eye at the existing state of the globe, we will see right away that in Europe the principles of the French constitution are already those of all enlightened men. We will see that they are too widely disseminated and too openly professed for the efforts of tyrants and priests to prevent them from penetrating into the hovels of their slaves, where they will soon rekindle those embers of good sense and that muffled indignation that the habit of suffering and ter-

ror have failed to totally extinguish in the minds of the oppressed. . . .

Can it be doubted that either wisdom or the senseless feuds of the European nations themselves, working with the slow but certain effects of progress in their colonies, will not soon produce the independence of the new world; and that then the European population, spreading rapidly across that immense land, must either civilize or make disappear the savage peoples that now inhabit these vast continents?

If one runs through the history of our undertakings and establishments in Africa and Asia, you will see our commercial monopolies, our treacheries, our bloodthirsty contempt for people of a different color and belief; the insolence of our usurpations; the extravagant missionary activities and intrigues of our priests which destroy their feelings of respect and benevolence that the superiority of our enlightenment and the advantages of our commerce had first obtained. But the moment is approaching, without any doubt, when ceasing to present ourselves to these peoples as tyrants or corrupters, we will become instruments of their improvement and their noble liberators. . . .

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- ▷ Slavery will be abolished, free trade established on the world's oceans, and European political authority in Asia and Africa ended.
-

Then the Europeans, limiting themselves to free trade, too knowledgeable of their own rights to show contempt for the rights of others, will respect this independence that until now they have violated with such audacity. Then their settlements, instead of being filled with government favorites by virtue of their rank or privileges who hasten by pillaging and dishonesty to amass fortunes so they can return to Europe to buy honors and titles, will be populated by hard-working men, seeking in these happy climates the affluence that eluded them in their homeland. . . . These settlements of robbers will become colonies of citizens who will plant in

Africa and Asia the principles and the example of European liberty, enlightenment, and reason. In place of clergy who carry to these people nothing but the most shameful superstitions and who disgust them and menace them with a new form of domination, one will see men taking their place who are devoted to spreading among the nations useful truths about their happiness, and explaining to them both the concept of their own interest and of their rights. . . .

Thus the day will come when the sun will shine only on free men born knowing no other master but their reason; where tyrants and their slaves, priests and their ignorant, hypocritical writings will exist only in the history books and theaters; where we will only be occupied with mourning their victims and their dupes; when we will maintain an active vigilance by remembering their horrors; when we will learn to recognize and stifle by the force of reason the first seeds of superstition and tyranny, if ever they dare to appear! . . .

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- ▷ Condorcet explains how education and scientific knowledge will be made available to all.
-

If we consider the human creations based on scientific theories, we shall see that their progress can have no limits; that the procedures in constructing them can be improved and simplified just like those of scientific procedures; that new tools, machines, and looms will add every day to the capabilities and skill of humans; they will improve and perfect the precision of their products while decreasing the amount of time and labor needed to produce them. Then the obstacles in the path of this progress will disappear, accidents will be foreseen and prevented, the unhealthful conditions that are due either to the work itself or the climate will be eliminated.

A smaller piece of land will be able to produce commodities of greater usefulness and value than before; greater benefits will be obtained with less waste; the production of the same industrial product will result in less destruction of raw

materials and greater durability. We will be able to choose for each type of soil the production of goods that will satisfy the greatest number of wants and with the least amount of labor and expenditure. Thus without any sacrifice, the means of achieving conservation and limiting waste will follow the progress of the art of producing various goods, preparing them, and making them into finished products. Thus . . . each individual will work less but more productively and will be able to better satisfy his needs. . . .

Among the advances of the human mind we should reckon as most important for the general welfare is the complete destruction of those prejudices that have established an inequality of rights between the sexes, an inequality damaging even to the party it favors. One will look in vain for reasons to justify it on the basis of differences in physical make up, the strength of intellect, and moral sensibility. This inequality has no other root cause than the abuse of force, and it is to no purpose to try to excuse it through sophistical arguments. We will show how the abolition of practices condoned by this prejudice will increase the well-being of families and encourage domestic virtues, the prime foundation of all others; how it will favor the progress of education, and especially make it truly universal, partly because it will be extended to both sexes more equitably, and partly because it cannot be truly universal even for males without the co-operation of mothers in families. . . .

Would it not produce what until now has been a dream, namely national manners and customs, gentle and pure, not shaped by prideful displays of asceticism, hypocritical appearances, or modesty inspired by fear of shame or religious terrors, but by freely acquired habits inspired by nature and approved by reason?

The most enlightened people, having seized for themselves the right to control their life and treasure, will slowly come to perceive war as the deadliest plague and the most monstrous of crimes. . . . They will understand that they cannot become conquerors without losing their liberty; that perpetual alliances are the only way to

preserve independence; and that they should seek their security not power. . . .

We may conclude then that the perfectibility of humanity is indefinite. However, until now, we have imagined humanity with the same natural abilities and physical make-up as at the present. How great will our certitude be, and how limitless our hopes, if one were to believe that these natural abilities themselves, this physical make-up, are also capable of improvement? This is the last question we shall consider.

The organic perfectibility or degeneration of species of plants and animals may be regarded as one of the general laws of nature. This law is also applicable to the human species. No one can doubt that progress in preventive medicine, the use of healthier food and housing, a way of living that increases strength through exercise without destroying it through excess, and finally, the destruction of the two most persistent causes of deterioration, poverty and excessive wealth, will lengthen for human beings the average life span and assure more good health and a stronger constitution. Clearly, improvements in medical practices resulting from the progress of reason and the order of society, will cause transmittable and contagious diseases to disappear as well as diseases caused by climate, nourishment, and certain vocations. . . . Would it be absurd then to imagine . . . that we will arrive at a time when death will be nothing more than the result of extraordinary accidents or of the gradual destruction of vital forces, and that as a result, the interval between birth and the time of that destruction will no longer have a fixed term? . . .

Finally, can we not also extend the same hopes to the intellectual and moral faculties? . . . Is it not also probable that education, while perfecting these qualities, will also influence, modify, and improve that bodily nature itself? Analogy, analysis of the development of human faculties, and even certain facts seem to prove the reality of such conjectures, which extend even further the limits of our hopes. . . .

How much does this picture of the human species, freed of all chains, released from the

empire of blind fate and the enemies of progress, and marching with a firm and sure pace on the path of truth, virtue, and honor, present the philosopher with a scene that consoles him for the errors, crimes, and injustices that still defile the earth and often victimize him? In contemplation of this scene he receives the reward for his efforts on behalf of the advance of reason and the defense of liberty. . . . Such contemplation is a

place of refuge where the memories of his persecutors cannot follow him, where living with the thought of humans established in their natural rights and dignity, he forgets the way greed, fear, and envy have tormented and corrupted them. It is there he truly exists with his fellow humans in an Elysium¹ which his reason has created and which his love of humanity adorns with the purest pleasures.

¹In Greek mythology, Elysium, also known as the Elysian Fields or the Isles of the Blessed, was the dwelling place

after death of virtuous mortals or those given immortality by divine favor.

From Mercantilism to Laissez Faire

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European governments pursued a policy known as *mercantilism*, a system of economic regulation designed to strengthen the state and increase its gold and silver supply by encouraging industry, the growth of commerce, and self-sufficiency in agriculture and the production of raw materials. Although Europe's national and local governments had regulated economic activities since the Middle Ages, mercantilism was a new approach to regulation that reflected the growing competitiveness of the European state system and the authority of the absolutist state. Mercantilists viewed economic activity as a form of warfare in which each nation competed for economic advantages that would increase tax revenue, add to its hoard of gold and silver, maintain high employment, and sustain a favorable balance of trade, all at the expense of its rivals. On balance, its early impact was positive, with government encouragement of commerce and protection of industries contributing to Europe's economic expansion.

By the eighteenth century, however, mercantilism had many critics who argued that it inflated prices, stifled innovation, and smothered the entrepreneurial spirit. In addition, mercantilism was opposed by many intellectuals connected with the Enlightenment who prized individual liberty, deplored government intrusiveness, and were convinced that a nation's economy, like nature itself, worked best when its own "natural laws" operated without interference. The critics of mercantilism in France were known as *Physiocrats*, a term rooted in the Greek words meaning the "rule of nature."

The most famous critic of mercantilism was a Scot, Adam Smith, whose *Wealth of Nations* (1776) called for free trade and economic competition at every level. His disciples, the economic liberals of the nineteenth century, convinced governments to abandon a good part of old-style mercantilism, enabling thousands of investors and entrepreneurs to take advantage of the unparalleled opportunities provided by industrialization.

The Advantages of Mercantilism



39 ▼ *Jean-Baptiste Colbert,* *"MEMORANDUM ON ENGLISH* *ALLIANCES" and "MEMORANDUM* *TO THE KING ON FINANCES"*

Born to a family of merchants in Reims in 1619, Jean-Baptiste Colbert was the best known and most powerful minister of Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715). During the 1660s Colbert held several positions in the royal administration, the most important of which was controller general of finance. Colbert's goal was to strengthen the French economy to provide Louis the resources necessary to fight his wars. No statesman better represents the policies of seventeenth-century mercantilism; for the French, the words *mercantilisme* and *Colbertisme* are virtually synonymous.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why does Colbert feel that French commercial expansion can come only at the expense of France's competitors?
2. How much does the economic welfare of the French people figure in Colbert's plans and strategies?
3. Who among the French people will benefit from and who will be harmed by mercantilism? In what ways?
4. What types of industries is Colbert especially interested in supporting? What do they reveal about the overall purposes of mercantilism?
5. Drawing on Colbert's memoranda and the biographies of Ming merchants in Chapter 7 (source 30), what comparisons can you make between the attitudes toward merchants on the part of the seventeenth-century French government and the sixteenth-century Chinese government?

MEMORANDUM ON ENGLISH ALLIANCES (1669)

The commerce of all Europe is carried on by ships of every size to the number of 20,000, and it is perfectly obvious that this number cannot be increased, because the number of people in all states remains the same and the consumption of goods also remains the same. . . .

It must be added that commerce causes a per-

petual combat both in peacetime and during war among the nations of Europe as to who will win the most of it. . . . Each nation works incessantly to have its legitimate share of it and to gain an advantage over other nations. The Dutch currently are fighting this war with 15,000 to 16,000 ships, a government of merchants, all of whose principles and power are directed solely toward preservation and increase of their commerce, and more dedication, hard work, and thrift than any other nation.

The English fight with 3,000 to 4,000 vessels, less industriousness and attention, and more expenses. The French fight with 500 to 600 ships. The last two cannot improve their commerce except by increasing their number of vessels, and cannot increase this number except from the 20,000 that carry all the commerce, and consequently by cutting into the 15,000 or 16,000 of the Dutch.

MEMORANDUM TO THE KING ON FINANCES (1670)

. . . The well-being and economic recovery of the people depend on apportioning what they pay into the public treasury with the amount of money that circulates in commerce. This ratio has always been 150 million livres¹ to 45 million livres. At present it is at 120 million to 70 million. As a result, it is in excess by a wide margin, and as would be expected, the people are falling into great misery.

It will be necessary to do one of two things to stop this evil: either lower tax impositions and expenditures, or increase the amount of money in public commerce. For the first, impositions have been lowered already. . . . For the second, it consists of three parts: increase money in public commerce by attracting it from other lands; by keeping it inside the kingdom and keeping it from leaving; by giving the people the means to make a profit.

In these points consist the greatness and the power of the state and the magnificence of the king, . . . and this magnificence is all the greater in that it weakens at the same time all the neighboring states, because, there being only a given quantity of money circulating in all of Europe, and this quantity is increased from time to time by what comes in from the West Indies, it is

certain and clear if there is only 150,000,000 livres that circulate publicly in France, that one cannot succeed in increasing it by 20,000,000, 30,000,000 or even 50,000,000 without at the same time taking the same quantity from neighboring states; which is the cause of the double success of the past few years, the one increasing the power and greatness of your majesty, the other abasing that of his enemies and those who are jealous of him.

Thus in these three areas was concentrated all the work and attention to finances since the beginning of your majesty's administration; and since it is commerce alone and what depends on it that can produce such a great result, it was a task to introduce it into the realm because neither the general population nor individuals have applied themselves to it, and in a way it is even contrary to the genius of the nation. . . . For this, it was necessary to see what was done to attract money into the kingdom and to keep it there; . . .

The Dutch, English, and other nations take from the kingdom wine, brandy, vinegars, linen, paper, articles of clothing, and wheat when needed. . . . But they brought us woolen cloth and other goods made of wool and animal hair; sugar, tobacco, and indigo from the Americas; all the spices, drugs, [illegible word] in oils, silks, cotton cloths, leather goods, and an infinity of other goods from the East Indies; the same merchandise from the Levant.² . . . All the merchandise necessary for ship construction, such as wood, masts, iron from Sweden and Galicia,³ copper, tar, cannons, hemp, rope, tin coated sheet iron, brass, navigation instruments, musket balls, iron anchors, and generally everything necessary for the construction of vessels for the fleet for the king and for his subjects.

Gunpowder, fuses, muskets, cannon shot, lead, pewter, clothes, serge⁴ from London, silk and wool stockings from London, barracans, damask,

¹The livre was the basic unit of French money.

²The eastern Mediterranean.

³A region of east central Europe then part of the Austrian Hapsburg Empire, today divided between Poland and Ukraine.

⁴Serge is a fabric, as are barracan, damask, camlet, dimities, and twills, all mentioned later in Colbert's memorandum.

camlet, and other fabrics from Flanders, lacework from Venice and Holland, trimming from Flanders, camlet from Brussels, carpets of Flanders; beef and mutton from Germany, hides and horses from every land, silk fabrics from Milan, Genoa, and Holland. . . .

By these means and an infinity of others that would be too long to enumerate, the Dutch, English, merchants of Hamburg, and others bring into the kingdom a quantity of merchandise much greater than they take away, withdraw the surplus in cash, which produced both their prosperity and the poverty of the kingdom, and as a result, unquestionably, added to their power and our weakness.

It is necessary next to examine the steps taken to change this fate. First, in 1662, your majesty sustained the right to 50 *sols*⁵ for ton of freight carried on foreign vessels, which has had the impressive result that the number of French ships has increased every year, and in seven or eight years the Dutch have been almost excluded from port-to-port commerce. . . . Finally, after carefully considering the matter, your majesty ordered the tariff of 1664, in which the duties are regulated by a completely different principle, that is, all the merchandise and manufactured goods of the realm were notably favored, and the prices of foreign goods increased; . . . this change began to offer the opportunity to manufacture these same items in the kingdom; and to this end:

The fabric manufacture of Sedan was re-established, and the number of looms increased from 12 to 62. New establishments have been built at Abbeville, Dieppe, Fecamp, and Rouen, at which there are presently more than 200 looms; the factory for barracan was established at Ferte-sous-Jouarre with 120 looms; a factory for small Brussels damask at Meaux, composed of 80 looms; a carpet factory in the same city with 20 looms; for camlets at Amiens and Abbeville with 120 looms; dimities and twills

of Bruges and Brussels at Montmorin, St. Quentin, and Avranches, with 30 looms; for fine Dutch linens, at Bresle, Louviers, Laval, and other places, with 200 looms; serge of London at Gournay, Auxerre, Autun, and other places with 300 looms; English woolen stockings . . . in 32 towns and cities; that for tin in Nivernois; that for French lace in 52 towns and cities, in which more than 20,000 workers toil; the making of brass established in Champagne; brass wire in Burgundy; gold thread of Milan in Lyons; the manufacture of silks in the same city.

The search for saltpeter,⁶ and at the same time the manufacture of gunpowder; that of match; the establishment of the manufacture of muskets and weapons of all sorts . . . ; the distribution of stud horses, which has produced and certainly will continue to produce the re-establishment of stud farms and will considerably decrease the import of foreign horses. . . .

And since your majesty wished to work hard for the restoration of his navy . . . it was absolutely necessary to try hard to find within the kingdom, or to establish everything needed for the great design.

To this end, the manufacture of tar was established at Médoc, Auvergne, Dauphiné and Provence; iron cannons in Burgundy, Nivernois, Saintonge, and Périgord; anchors in Dauphiné, Nivernois, Brittany, and Rochefort; sailcloth in Dauphiné; cloth for banners at Auvergne; pilots' instruments at Dieppe and la Rochelle; wood cutting for ships . . . ; wood for masts, which was unknown in the kingdom, has been found in Provence, Languedoc, Auvergne, Dauphiné, and in the Pyrenees. Iron, which was obtained from Sweden and Biscay, is now made within the kingdom. High quality hemp for rope, which came from Prussia and Piedmont, is now obtained from Burgundy, Maconnais, Bresse, and Dauphiné.

In a word, everything needed for the construction of vessels is at present established in the kingdom, so that your majesty can do without

⁵A *sol* was a French coin equal to one-twentieth of a livre. Colbert is referring to the royal tariff of 1662.

⁶Potassium nitrate, used in making gunpowder.

foreigners for the navy, and even in a short time can supply them with what they need and extract their money. . . .

In addition, to prevent the Dutch from profiting from American commerce, which they have gotten hold of and excluded the French, with annual profits of a million livres in gold, your majesty has established the West India Company and invested in it almost 4 million livres; he has also had the satisfaction of taking away from the Dutch that million livres per year that maintained more than 4,000 of their subjects who continually sailed among these islands on their 200 ships. . . . In addition, to prevent the same

Dutch from taking more than 10 million livres out of the kingdom through all the goods they bring from the East Indies and the Levant, your majesty formed companies for the same areas, in which he has invested more than 5 million livres. . . .

All these great undertakings, however, and an infinity of others that are in a sense innovations . . . are still in their infancy and can be carried to perfection only with work and stubborn application and can exist only with the resources of the state, since considerable expenditures are always necessary to support all of this great system. . . .

Capitalism's Prophet



40 ▼ Adam Smith, *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*

Surprisingly few biographical details are known about Adam Smith, the economist famed for his devastating critique of mercantilism in *The Wealth of Nations*. Born in 1723 in a small Scottish fishing village and educated at Glasgow and Oxford, between 1751 and 1763 he held chairs in logic and moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. The publication of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759 ensured his literary and philosophical reputation. In 1763 he became the tutor of an English aristocrat's son and lived for three years in France, where he met many prominent French intellectuals. From 1767 to 1776 he lived in semi-retirement in Scotland and finished *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. In 1778 he became commissioner of customs in Scotland and died in Edinburgh in 1790.

The Wealth of Nations went through five English editions and was published in several European translations in the eighteenth century. Its importance lies in its general approach to economics, which brought systematic analysis to wages, labor, trade, population, rents, and money supply, and in its unrelenting assault on mercantilism. The key to economic growth, Smith asserted, was not regulation but free competition among individuals and among nations.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Smith denies that a nation's wealth consists of the amount of gold and silver it controls. What arguments does he present to defend his position, and what are their implications for trade policy?
2. Smith suggests a paradox that each individual by pursuing his or her own self-interest promotes the general welfare of society. What specific

examples of this paradox are provided? What implications does this paradox have for government policy?

3. What groups in society would you expect to be most enthusiastic about Smith's ideas? Why? What groups might be expected to oppose them?
4. The novelty of Smith's ideas can best be understood by comparing them with those of Colbert (source 39). How do the two men disagree about the following issues: (a) the benefits of government economic regulation, (b) economic competition among nations, and (c) the meaning of the balance of trade?

SELF-INTEREST AND THE FREE MARKET

1. This division of labor,¹ from which so many advantages are derived, is not originally the effect of any human wisdom, which foresees and intends that general opulence to which it gives occasion. It is the necessary, though very slow and gradual consequence of a certain propensity in human nature which has in view no such extensive utility; the propensity to truck,² barter, and exchange one thing for another.

2. Whether this propensity be one of those original principles in human nature, of which no further account can be given; or whether, as seems more probable, it be the necessary consequence of the faculties of reason and speech, it belongs not to our present subject to enquire. It is common to all men, and to be found in no other race of animals, which seem to know neither this nor any other species of contracts. . . . Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog. Nobody ever saw one animal by its gestures and natural cries signify to another, this is mine, that yours; I am willing to give this for that. . . . In almost every other race of animals each individual, which it is grown up to maturity, is entirely independent, and in its natural

state has occasion for the assistance of no other living creature. But man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favor, and show them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind, proposes to do this. Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want, is the meaning of every such offer; and it is in this manner that we obtain from one another the far greater part of those good offices which we stand in need of. It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens. . . .

PRICES AND THE FREE MARKET

The quantity of every commodity brought to market naturally suits itself to the effectual demand. It is the interest of all those who employ their land, labor, or stock,³ in bringing any com-

¹This section of *The Wealth of Nations* follows a long discussion of the *division of labor*. As utilized by Smith, this term refers to economic specialization, both in terms of different professions and in terms of the separate tasks carried out by different individuals in the process of manufacturing or preparing commodities for the market.

²A synonym for barter.

³Money or capital invested or available for investment or trading.

modity to market, that the quantity never should exceed the effectual demand; and it is the interest of all other people that it never should fall short of that demand.

If at any time it exceeds the effectual demand, some of the component parts of its price must be paid below their natural rate. If it is rent,⁴ the interest of the landlords will immediately prompt them to withdraw a part of their land; and if it is wages or profit, the interest of the laborers in the one case, and of their employers in the other, will prompt them to withdraw a part of their labor or stock from this employment. The quantity brought to market will soon be no more than sufficient to supply the effectual demand. All the different parts of its price will rise to their natural rate, and the whole price to its natural price.

If, on the contrary, the quantity brought to market should at any time fall short of the effectual demand, some of the component parts of its price must rise above their natural rate. If it is rent, the interest of all other landlords will naturally prompt them to prepare more land for the raising of this commodity; if it is wages or profit, the interest of all other laborers and dealers will soon prompt them to employ more labor and stock in preparing and bringing it to market. The quantity brought thither will soon be sufficient to supply the effectual demand. All the different parts of its price will soon sink to their natural rate, and the whole price to its natural price. . . .

The monopolists, by keeping the market constantly under-stocked, by never fully supplying the effectual demand, sell their commodities much above the natural price, and raise their emoluments,⁵ whether they consist in wages or profit, greatly above their natural rate.

The price of monopoly is upon every occasion the highest which can be got. The natural price, or the price of free competition, on the contrary, is the lowest which can be taken, not upon every

occasion, indeed, but for any considerable time together. The one is upon every occasion the highest which can be squeezed out of the buyers, or which, it is supposed, they will consent to give: The other is the lowest which the sellers can commonly afford to take, and at the same time continue their business.

The exclusive privileges of corporations, statutes of apprenticeship,⁶ and all those laws which restrain, in particular employments, the competition to a smaller number than might otherwise go into them, have the same tendency, though in a less degree. They are a sort of enlarged monopolies, and may frequently, for ages together and in whole classes of employments, keep up the market price of particular commodities above the natural price, and maintain both the wages of the labor and the profits of the stock employed about them somewhat above their natural rate.

MERCANTALIST FALLACIES

That wealth consists in money, or in gold and silver, is a popular notion which naturally arises from the double function of money, as the instrument of commerce, and as the measure of value. In consequence of its being the instrument of commerce, when we have money we can more readily obtain whatever else we have occasion for, than by means of any other commodity. The great affair [thing to do], we always find, is to get money. . . .

A rich country, in the same manner as a rich man, is supposed to be a country abounding in money; and to heap up gold and silver in any country is supposed to be the readiest way to enrich it. . . .

In consequence of these popular notions, all the different nations of Europe have studied, though to little purpose, every possible means

⁴In this sense, the cost of land in terms of the payments made by tenants to their landlord.

⁵The returns from employment, usually in the form of compensation.

⁶Laws that restricted the number of individuals who could receive training in trades through apprenticeship.

of accumulating gold and silver in their respective countries. Spain and Portugal, the proprietors of the principal mines which supply Europe with those metals, have either prohibited their exportation under the severest penalties, or subjected it to a considerable duty. The like prohibition seems anciently to have [been] made a part of the policy of most other European nations. When those countries became commercial, the merchants found this prohibition, upon many occasions, extremely inconvenient. . . .

They represented [stated forcefully], first, that the exportation of gold and silver in order to purchase foreign goods, did not always diminish the quantity of those metals in the kingdom. . . .

They represented, secondly, that this prohibition could not hinder the exportation of gold and silver, which, on account of the smallness of their bulk in proportion to their value, could easily be smuggled abroad. . . .

Those arguments . . . were solid so far as they asserted that the exportation of gold and silver in trade might frequently be advantageous to the country. They were solid too, in asserting that no prohibition could prevent their exportation, when private people found any advantage in exporting them. But they were sophistical in supposing, that either to preserve or to augment the quantity of those metals required more the attention of government, than to preserve or to augment the quantity of any other useful commodities, which the freedom of trade, without any such attention, never fails to supply in the proper quantity. . . .

A country that has no mines of its own must undoubtedly draw its gold and silver from foreign countries, in the same manner as one that has no vineyards of its own must draw its wines. It does not seem necessary, however, that the attention of government should be more turned towards the one than towards the other object. A country that has wherewithal to buy wine, will always get the wine which it has occasion for; and a country that has wherewithal to buy gold and silver, will never be in want of those metals.

They are to be bought for a certain price like all other commodities, and as they are the price of all other commodities, so all other commodities are the price of those metals. We trust with perfect security that the freedom of trade, without any attention of government, will always supply us with the wine which we have occasion for: and we may trust with equal security that it will always supply us with all the gold and silver which we can afford to purchase or to employ, either in circulating our commodities, or in other uses.

▼ ▼ ▼

By restraining, either by high duties, or by absolute prohibitions, the importation of such goods from foreign countries as can be produced at home, the monopoly of the home market is more or less secured to the domestic industry employed in producing them. . . . But whether it tends either to increase the general industry of the society, or to give it the most advantageous direction, is not, perhaps, altogether so evident. . . .

Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage, naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.

First, every individual endeavors to employ his capital as near home as he can, and consequently as much as he can in the support of domestic industry, provided always that he can thereby obtain the ordinary, or not a great deal less than the ordinary, profits of stock.

Secondly, every individual who employs his capital in the support of domestic industry, necessarily endeavors so to direct that industry, that its produce may be of the greatest possible value. . . .

As every individual, therefore, endeavors as much as he can both to employ his capital in the

support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value, every individual necessarily labors to render the annual revenue of the society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for the society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. . . .

What is the species of domestic industry which his capital can employ, and of which the produce is likely to be of the greatest value, every individual, it is evident, can, in his local situation, judge much better than any statesman or lawgiver can do for him. The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capital, would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it.

To give the monopoly of the home market to the produce of domestic industry, in any particular art or manufacture, is in some measure to direct private people in what manner they ought

to employ their capital, and must, in almost all cases, be either a useless or a hurtful regulation. If the produce of domestic [industry] can be brought there as cheap as that of foreign industry, the regulation is evidently useless. If it cannot, it must generally be hurtful. It is the maxim of every prudent master of a family, never to attempt to make at home what it will cost him more to make than to buy. . . .

What is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. If a foreign country can supply us with a commodity cheaper than we ourselves can make it, better buy it of them with some part of the produce of our own industry, employed in a way in which we have some advantage. . . .

To expect, indeed, that the freedom of trade should ever be entirely restored in Great Britain, is as absurd as to expect that an Oceania or Utopia should ever be established in it. Not only the prejudices of the public, but what is much more unconquerable, the private interests of many individuals, irresistibly oppose it. . . .

The undertaker of a great manufacture, who, by the home markets being suddenly laid open to the competition of foreigners, should be obliged to abandon his trade, would no doubt suffer very considerably. That part of his capital which had usually been employed in purchasing materials and in paying his workmen might, without much difficulty perhaps, find another employment. But that part of it which was fixed in workhouses, and in the instruments of trade, could scarce be disposed of without considerable loss. The equitable regard, therefore, to his interest requires that changes of this kind should never be introduced suddenly, but slowly, gradually, and after a very long warning.

Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century

After two centuries of Mongol rule ended in the late 1400s, Russia embarked on a period of remarkable expansion in which the tsars consolidated their control of European Russia, then extended their authority eastward across the Urals into Siberia. By the 1630s Russia stretched all the way to the Pacific and was the largest nation in the world.

Russia's western border, however, remained insecure. The Livonian War (1558–1582), launched against Poland and Sweden, resulted in territorial losses, and during the period of political breakdown known as the Time of Troubles (1604–1613), Poland and Sweden sent armies deep into Russian territory. In 1612 the Russians drove out the invaders, and for the next several decades the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) diverted European rulers from Russian adventures. The Turks remained a threat, however, and in the late 1600s the Poles and the Swedes resumed their pressure.

Russia's vulnerability set the stage for an emotional debate among the Russians in the 1700s that continues even today. The issue was straightforward: Should the Russians abandon much or all of their past and strive to emulate the technologically superior, wealthier, and ostensibly more successful nations of Western Europe?

Tsar Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725) gave an unequivocally positive response to this question. He was determined to pull Russia out of its perceived backwardness by mandating the adoption of Western European institutions and mores. Many Russians found his goals and policies abhorrent. They treasured Russia's uniqueness and believed that in certain respects their country was superior to the nations of Western Europe. These lovers of Russia's Slavic traditions (later known as *Slavophiles*) argued that abandonment of Russia's past was too high a price to pay for Europeanization.

Variations of Russia's Westernizer-Slavophile debate later appeared among many peoples of Asia and Africa. As Europeans forced themselves into their lives, these people too had to ask themselves how willing they were, if at all, to abandon cultural and religious traditions for the lure of Western science, military power, and material gain. They, like the Russians, would find no easy answer to this question.

Peter the Great's Blueprint for Russia



41 ▼ *Peter the Great, EDICTS AND DECREES*

Peter the Great stands out as one of history's most significant figures during the past three hundred years. This remarkable man developed an interest in Western Europe when as a boy he spent hours smoking and drinking in the German quarter, the Moscow district where visiting Europeans resided. His fascination grew during two visits to Western Europe, where Dutch and British commerce and naval technology especially impressed him.

But the urgency of Peter's efforts to Europeanize Russia indicates that he was motivated more by his sense of Russia's vulnerability than a personal admiration of things European. In 1700 a decisive defeat by the Swedes at the Battle of Narva spurred him into action. With characteristic energy and single-mindedness he embarked on his campaign to transform Russia, issuing in the next twenty-five years no fewer than three thousand decrees on everything from the structure of government to male shaving habits. A few examples are included here.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What do these decrees reveal about Peter the Great's motives for his reforms?
2. What can be learned from these decrees about Russian social relationships and the state of the Russian economy?
3. Why do you think Peter believed it was important that the Russians change their dress, shaving habits, and calendar for his ultimate goals to be achieved?
4. What evidence do these edicts provide about opposition or indifference to Peter's reforms on the part of his subjects?
5. What do these edicts reveal about Peter's views of the state and its relationship to his individual subjects?
6. What groups within Russia might have been most likely to oppose Peter's reforms? Why?

LEARNING FROM EUROPE

(Decree on the New Calendar {1699})

It is known to His Majesty that not only many European Christian lands, but also Slavic nations which are in total accord with our Eastern Orthodox Church . . . agree to count their years

from the eighth day after the birth of Christ, that is from the first day of January, and not from the creation of the world,¹ because of the many difficulties and discrepancies of this reckoning. It is now the year 1699 from the birth of Christ, and from the first of January will begin both the new year 1700 and a new century; and so His

¹Before January 1, 1700, the Russian calendar started from the date of the creation of the world, which was reckoned at 5508 B.C.E. The year began on September 1.

Majesty has ordered, as a good and useful measure, that from now on time will be reckoned in government offices and dates be noted on documents and property deeds, starting from the first of January 1700. And to celebrate this good undertaking and the new century . . . in the sovereign city of Moscow . . . let the reputable citizens arrange decorations of pine, fir, and juniper trees and boughs along the busiest main streets and by the houses of eminent church and lay persons of rank. . . . Poorer persons should place at least one shrub or bough on their gates or on their house. . . . Also, on the first day of January, as a sign of rejoicing, wishes for the new year and century will be exchanged, and the following will be organized: when fireworks are lit and guns fired on the great Red Square, let the boyars,² the Lords of the Palace, of the Chamber, and the Council, and the eminent personages of Court, Army, and Merchant ranks, each in his own grounds, fire three times from small guns, if they have any, or from muskets and other small arms, and shoot some rockets into the air.

*(Decree on the Invitation
of Foreigners {1702})*

Since our accession to the throne all our efforts and intentions have tended to govern this realm in such a way that all of our subjects should, through our care for the general good, become more and more prosperous. For this end we have always tried to maintain internal order, to defend the state against invasion, and in every possible way to improve and to extend trade. With this purpose we have been compelled to make some necessary and salutary changes in the administration, in order that our subjects might more easily gain a knowledge of matters of which they were before ignorant, and become more skillful in their commercial relations. We have therefore given orders, made dispositions, and founded institutions indispensable for increasing our trade

with foreigners, and shall do the same in the future. Nevertheless we fear that matters are not in such a good condition as we desire, and that our subjects cannot in perfect quietness enjoy the fruits of our labors, and we have therefore considered still other means to protect our frontier from the invasion of the enemy, and to preserve the rights and privileges of our State, and the general peace of all Christians. . . .

To attain these worthy aims, we have endeavored to improve our military forces, which are the protection of our State, so that our troops may consist of well-drilled men, maintained in perfect order and discipline. In order to obtain greater improvement in this respect, and to encourage foreigners, who are able to assist us in this way, as well as artisans profitable to the State, to come in numbers to our country, we have issued this manifesto, and have ordered printed copies of it to be sent throughout Europe. . . . And as in our residence of Moscow, the free exercise of religion of all other sects, although not agreeing with our church, is already allowed, so shall this be hereby confirmed anew in such manner that we, by the power granted to us by the Almighty, shall exercise no compulsion over the consciences of men, and shall gladly allow every Christian to care for his own salvation at his own risk.

*(An Instruction to Russian Students
Abroad Studying Navigation {1714})*

1. Learn how to draw plans and charts and how to use the compass and other naval indicators.

2. Learn how to navigate a vessel in battle as well as in a simple maneuver, and learn how to use all appropriate tools and instruments; namely, sails, ropes, and oars, and the like matters, on row boats and other vessels.

3. Discover as much as possible how to put ships to sea during a naval battle. . . . Obtain from foreign naval officers written statements,

²Members of the hereditary nobility.

bearing their signatures and seals, of how adequately you are prepared for naval duties.

4. If, upon his return, anyone wishes to receive from the Tsar greater favors, he should learn, in addition to the above enumerated instructions, how to construct those vessels aboard which he would like to demonstrate his skills.

5. Upon his return to Moscow, every foreign-trained Russian should bring with him at his own expense, for which he will later be reimbursed, at least two experienced masters of naval science. They the returnees will be assigned soldiers, one soldier per returnee, to teach them what they have learned abroad. . . .

CREATING A NEW RUSSIAN

(Decree on Western Dress {1701})

Western dress shall be worn by all the boyars, members of our councils and of our court . . . gentry of Moscow, secretaries . . . provincial gentry, gosti,³ government officials, streltsy,⁴ members of the guilds purveying for our household, citizens of Moscow of all ranks, and residents of provincial cities . . . excepting the clergy and peasant tillers of the soil. The upper dress shall be of French or Saxon cut, and the lower dress . . . — waistcoat, trousers, boots, shoes, and hats — shall be of the German type. They shall also ride German saddles. Likewise the womenfolk of all ranks, including the priests', deacons', and church attendants' wives, the wives of the dragoons, the soldiers, and the streltsy, and their children, shall wear Western dresses, hats, jackets, and underwear — undervests and petticoats — and shoes. From now on no one of the above-mentioned is to wear Russian dress or Circassian⁵ coats, sheepskin coats, or Russian peasant coats, trousers, boots, and shoes. It is also forbidden to ride Russian saddles, and the crafts-

men shall not manufacture them or sell them at the marketplaces.

(Decree on Shaving {1705})

Henceforth, in accordance with this, His Majesty's decree, all court attendants . . . provincial service men, government officials of all ranks, military men, all the gosti, members of the wholesale merchants' guild, and members of the guilds purveying for our household must shave their beards and moustaches. But, if it happens that some of them do not wish to shave their beards and moustaches, let a yearly tax be collected from such persons; from court attendants . . . Special badges shall be issued to them from the Administrator of Land Affairs of Public Order . . . which they must wear. . . . As for the peasants, let a toll of two half-copecks⁶ per beard be collected at the town gates each time they enter or leave a town; and do not let the peasants pass the town gates, into or out of town, without paying this toll.

MILITARY AND ECONOMIC REFORMS

(Decree on Promotion to Officer's Rank {1714})

Since there are many who promote to officer rank their relatives and friends — young men who do not know the fundamentals of soldiering, not having served in the lower ranks — and since even those who serve [in the ranks] do so for a few weeks or months only, as a formality; therefore . . . let a decree be promulgated that henceforth there shall be no promotion [to officer rank] of men of noble extraction or of any others who have not first served as privates in the Guards. This decree does not apply to soldiers of lowly

³Merchants who often served the tsar in some capacity.

⁴Members of the imperial guard stationed in Moscow.

⁵Circassia was a Russian territory between the Caspian and Black seas.

⁶One-twentieth a ruble, the basic unit of Russian money.

origin who, after long service in the ranks, have received their commissions through honest service or to those who are promoted on the basis of merit, now or in the future; it applies exclusively to those who have remained in the ranks for a short time, only as a formality, as described above.

*(Statute for the College of
Manufactures⁷ {1723})*

His Imperial Majesty is diligently striving to establish and develop in the Russian Empire such manufacturing plants and factories as are found in other states, for the general welfare and prosperity of his subjects. He [therefore] most graciously charges the College of Manufactures to exert itself in devising the means to introduce, with the least expense, and to spread in the Russian Empire these and other ingenious arts, and especially those for which materials can be found within the empire. . . .

His Imperial Majesty gives permission to everyone, without distinction of rank or condition, to open factories wherever he may find suitable. This provision must be made public everywhere. . . .

Factory owners must be closely supervised, in order that they have at their plants good and experienced [foreign] master craftsmen, who are able to train Russians in such a way that these,

in turn, may themselves become masters, so that their produce may bring glory to the Russian manufactures. . . .

By the former decrees of His Majesty commercial people were forbidden to buy villages [i.e. to own serfs], the reason being that they were not engaged in any other activity beneficial for the state save commerce; but since it is now clear to all that many of them have started to found manufacturing establishments and build plants, both in companies and individually, which tend to increase the welfare of the state — and many of them have already started production; therefore permission is granted both to the gentry and to men of commerce to acquire villages for these factories without hindrance, [but] with the permission of the College of Manufactures. . . .

In order to stimulate voluntary immigration of various craftsmen from other countries into the Russian Empire, and to encourage them to establish factories and manufacturing plants freely and at their own expense, the College of Manufactures must send appropriate announcements to the Russian envoys accredited at foreign courts. The envoys should then, in an appropriate way, bring these announcements to the attention of men of various professions, urge them to come to settle in Russia, and help them to move.

⁷One of several administrative boards created by Peter in 1717. Based on Swedish precedent.

A Russian Critic of Westernization



42 ▼ *Mikhail Shcherbatov,* *ON THE CORRUPTION* *OF MORALS IN RUSSIA*

During the reign of Catherine the Great (1762–1796) Russian society continued to evolve along the lines laid down by Peter the Great. With the imperial court now in St. Petersburg, Peter's "window on the West," the German-born Catherine courted French intellectuals, encouraged the publication of Western European books, and proposed educational and political reforms inspired by Western models. Russian aristocrats spoke French, wore the latest European fashions, and

congratulated themselves on Russia's growing prestige and their newly acquired sophistication and refinement. As the following selection reveals, however, some Russians had misgivings about Russia's transformation.

Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov (1733–1790) was born into a distinguished aristocratic family with a tradition of service to the state. Having developed a keen interest in Western European thought and literature through his knowledge of French, he moved as a young man from Moscow to St. Petersburg, where he contributed to literary journals and joined in the political discussions sparked by Catherine's policies and proposals. His major work was a seven-volume *History of Russia from Earliest Times*, still unfinished at the time of his death. During the 1780s he experienced growing disillusionment with the changes in Russia since the reign of Peter the Great. He stated his reservations in his *On the Corruption of Morals in Russia*, written in 1787 but not published until 1897.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Shcherbatov what were the salient characteristics of Russia before the reforms of Peter the Great?
2. What changes instituted by Peter does Shcherbatov approve of? Why?
3. What reservations does Shcherbatov have concerning Peter's religious policies?
4. How would you describe Shcherbatov's vision of the ideal Russian society and government?
5. What specifically in Shcherbatov's view should Peter have done differently to prevent the moral decline of the Russian people?

I cannot but wonder at the short time in which morals in Russia have everywhere become corrupt. I can truly say that if, after entering later than other nations upon the path of enlightenment, nothing more remained for us than to follow prudently in the steps of nations previously enlightened, then indeed, in sociability and in various other things, it may be said that we have made wonderful progress and have taken gigantic steps to correct our outward appearance. But at the same time, with much greater speed, we have hastened to corrupt our morals, and have even come to this: that faith and God's Law have been extinguished in our hearts, Divine mysteries have fallen into disrepute and civil laws have become objects of scorn.

Children have no respect for parents, and are not ashamed to flout their will openly and to mock their old-fashioned behavior. Parents have no love for their offspring; . . . often they sacrifice them for profit, and many have become vendors of their daughters' honor for the sakes of ambition and luxury.¹ There is no genuine love between husbands and wives, who are often coolly indifferent to each other's adulteries; others, on some slight pretext, destroy the marriage concluded between them by the Church and are not merely unashamed but rather seem to take pride in this conduct. There is no family feeling, for the family name counts for nothing, and each lives for himself. There is no friendship, for everyone will sacrifice a friend for his own advan-

¹A reference to the marriage of girls of noble birth into merchant families.

tage. There is no loyalty to the monarch, for the chief aim of almost everyone is to deceive his sovereign, in order to receive from him ranks and lucrative rewards. There is no patriotism, for almost all men serve for their own advantage rather than for that of the nation. . . .

RUSSIA BEFORE PETER THE GREAT

Not only the subjects, but even our very monarchs led a very simple life. Their palaces were not large, as is attested by the old buildings that remain. Seven, eight, or at most, ten rooms, were sufficient for the monarch's accommodation.

These very palaces had no great embellishments, for the walls were bare, and the benches were covered with crimson cloth. . . .

For such a small number of rooms, not much lighting would be needed; but even here, they not only did not use, but considered it a sin to use wax candles,² and the rooms were lit by tallow candles, and even these were not set out in tens or hundreds; it was a large room indeed where four candles were set out on candlesticks.

Now let us consider the Czars' clothing. . . . Their ceremonial robes glittered all over with gold, jewels and diamonds. But their normal apparel, in which they looked for comfort rather than magnificence, was simple, and hence could not give rise to voluptuousness; . . . Generally speaking, there were no exquisite or perishable articles of finery, nor a large number of outfits, but when the Czar or Czarina had five, six, or, at most, ten outfits, then this was considered sufficient, and even these clothes were worn until they wore out, unless they were given to someone by the monarch out of special favor. The chief luxury in the Czar's ordinary clothing consisted of the precious furs, which they used for lining and on the edges of their garments; but these furs were

not purchased or imported from foreign states, but were a tribute, collected from the Siberian peoples. . . . The boyars and other dignitaries, according to their means, led a similar life, striving, however, out of respect for the Czar's rank, never to approach even this simple magnificence. But what kept them from voluptuousness most of all was the fact that they had no conception of changing fashions, but, what grandfathers wore, grandsons also wore and used, without considering themselves old-fashioned.

REIGN OF PETER THE GREAT

Peter the Great, in imitating foreign nations, not only strove to introduce to his realm a knowledge of sciences, arts and crafts, a proper military system, trade, and the most suitable forms of legislation; he also tried to introduce the kind of sociability, social intercourse and magnificence, which he first learnt from Lefort,³ and which he later saw for himself.⁴ Amid essential legislative measures, the organization of troops and artillery, he paid no less attention to modifying the old customs which seemed crude to him. He ordered beards to be shaved off, he abolished the old Russian garments, and instead of long robes he compelled the men to wear German coats,⁵ and the women to wear bodices, skirts, gowns and long dresses, and instead of skull-caps, to adorn their heads with fontanges and cornettes.⁶ He established various assemblies where the women, hitherto segregated from the company of men, were present with them at entertainments.

It was pleasant for the female sex, who had hitherto been almost slaves in their own homes, to enjoy all the pleasures of society, to adorn themselves with clothes and fineries, which en-

²Wax candles were to be used only in churches.

³Franz Lefort, a Genevan Swiss, was a mercenary in the Russian army who became Peter's close friend and advisor. He encouraged Peter's admiration of the West.

⁴A reference to Peter's protracted visit to Western Europe between March 1697 and September 1698.

⁵The phrase refers to any coat tailored in the Western European style.

⁶Forms of a tall headdress for fashionable women in France in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

hanced the beauty of their faces and set off their fine figures. It also gave them no small pleasure to be able to see in advance with whom they were to be joined for life, and that the faces of their husbands and betrothed were no longer covered with prickly beards.

And on the other hand, it was pleasant for men who were young and not set in the old ways to mix freely with the female sex and to be able to see in advance and make the acquaintance of their brides-to-be; for previously they married, relying on their parents' choice. . . . And this in itself meant that women, previously unaware of their beauty, began to realize its power; they began to try to enhance it with suitable clothes, and used far more luxury in their adornments than their ancestors.

If the passion to be pleasing produced such an effect on women, it could not fail to have an effect on men too, who wished to be attractive to them; thus, the same striving after adornment gave rise to the same luxury. And now they ceased to be content with one or two long coats, but began to have many made, with galoon, embroidery and point-d'espagne.⁷ . . .

The monarch himself kept to the old simplicity of morals in his dress . . . so he never wore anything costly. . . . However, for all his personal simplicity, he wanted his subjects to have a certain magnificence. I think that this great monarch, who did nothing without farsightedness, had it as his object to stimulate trade, industries and crafts through the magnificence and luxury of his subjects, being certain that in his lifetime excessive magnificence and voluptuousness would not enthrone themselves at the royal court.

▷ According to the author, despite Peter's reservations, the taste for luxury grew.

⁷Galoon is a tightly woven braid of gold, silver, or silk thread; *point d'espagne* is French for a type of lace embroidery.

⁸Ascribing human characteristics to God.

⁹A religious image — usually of Christ, the Virgin Mary,

or one of the saints — painted on a small wooden panel used in the devotions of Orthodox Christians. Many icons were thought to have miracle-working qualities or to have been produced in heaven.

PETER'S RELIGIOUS POLICIES

In Russia, the beard was regarded as being in the image of God, and it was considered a sin to shave it off, and through this, men fell into the heresy of the Anthropomorphites.⁸ Miracles, needlessly performed, manifestations of icons,⁹ rarely proven, were everywhere acclaimed, attracted superstitious idolatry, and provided incomes for dissolute priests.

Peter the Great strove to do away with all this. He issued decrees, ordering beards to be shaved off, and he placed a check on false miracles and manifestations and also on unseemly gatherings at shrines set up at crossways. . . .

But when did he do this? At a time when the nation was still unenlightened, and so, by taking superstition away from an unenlightened people, he removed its very faith in God's Law. This action of Peter the Great may be compared to that of an unskilled gardener, who, from a weak tree, cuts off the water-shoots which absorb its sap. If it had strong roots, then this pruning would cause it to bring forth fine, fruitful branches; but since it is weak and ailing, the cutting-off of these shoots . . . means that it fails; its wounds fail to heal over with sap, and hollows are formed which threaten to destroy the tree. Thus, the cutting-off of all superstitions did harm to the most basic articles of the faith; superstition decreased, but so did faith. The servile fear of Hell disappeared, but so did love of

God and his Holy Law; and morals, which for lack of other enlightenment used to be improved by faith, having lost this support began to fall into dissolution.

And so, through the labors and solicitude of this monarch, Russia acquired fame in Europe and influence in affairs. Her troops were organized in a proper fashion, and her fleets covered the White Sea and the Baltic; with these forces she overcame her old enemies and former conquerors, the Poles and the Swedes, and acquired important provinces and sea-ports. Sciences, arts and crafts began to flourish there, trade began to enrich her, and the Russians were transformed — from bearded men to clean-shaven men, from long-robed men to short-coated men; they became more sociable, and polite spectacles¹⁰ became known to them.

But at the same time, true attachment to the faith began to disappear, sacraments began to fall into disrepute, resoluteness diminished, yielding place to brazen, aspiring flattery; luxury and voluptuousness laid the foundation of their power, and hence avarice was also aroused, and, to the ruin of the laws and the detriment of the citizens, began to penetrate the law-courts.

¹⁰ Plays performed in a theater.

▷ Only the reign of a truly virtuous monarch can save Russia.

Then exiled virtue, leaving the deserts will enthrone herself amid the cities and at the Court itself. Justice will not tilt her scales whether for bribery or for fear of violence; fear and corruption will be banished from the grandees; patriotism will ensconce itself in the hearts of the citizens. Men will boast, not of luxurious living and riches, but of impartiality, merit and disinterestedness. They will not reckon who is in or out of favor at Court, but with law and virtue as their object, will consider them as compass, able to lead them to both rank and fortune. The nobles will serve in various offices with a zeal proper to their calling; merchants will cease to aspire to be officers and noblemen; each will keep to his own class, and trade will flourish with the decrease in the import of foreign goods which give rise to voluptuousness, and with the export of Russian goods. Arts and crafts will increase so as to produce within Russia whatever is needed for the luxury and magnificence of a certain number of people.

Revolutions in England and France

Revolutions involve more than changing leaders or replacing one ruling faction with another. Revolutions entail fundamental changes in the political order itself, often resulting in the transfer of power from one social group to another. Moreover, they affect more than politics. Revolutions reshape legal systems, schools, religious life, and economic practices and redefine relationships between rich and poor, males and females, old and young.

Because revolutions occur in societies already undergoing intellectual, economic, and social transformations, it is not surprising that revolutions first took place in Western Europe and the Americas, where economic and intellectual changes undermined the feudal-agrarian basis of society and traditional religious and political authorities. Nor is it surprising that in recent history revolutions have

spread to other parts of the world, as new ideologies and economic and social changes have affected one society after another.

In the 1600s England experienced two revolutions: the Puritan Revolution (or English Revolution or English Civil War) in the 1640s and 1650s and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and 1689. They limited royal authority, confirmed the fiscal and legislative powers of the Parliament, and guaranteed many basic rights for the English people, especially those with property. They also affirmed the constitutional principle that governments must not operate according to the whims of rulers but by established laws that apply to subjects and rulers alike.

The French Revolution had a greater impact than the English revolutions. A wider spectrum of society — peasants, urban workers, and women — participated, and it inspired more people around the globe. More important, the French Revolution went beyond liberalism and constitutionalism. It championed the principle of democracy — that every person, irrespective of social standing, should have a voice in government — and the principle of equality — that before the law all people should be treated identically. It also aroused the first nationalist movements in Europe and inspired disaffected groups throughout the world to seek political and social change through revolution. It ranks as one of the most significant events that have shaped the modern world.

The Foundations of Parliamentary Supremacy in England



43 ▼ *ENGLISH BILL OF RIGHTS*

The acceptance of the English Bill of Rights ended a clash between the Crown and Parliament that had convulsed English politics for almost a century. During the reigns of the first two Stuart kings, James I (r. 1603–1625) and his son Charles I (r. 1625–1649), the landowners, merchants, and lawyers who dominated the House of Commons fought the monarchy over religious, economic, diplomatic, and political issues that all centered on the fundamental question of Parliament's place in England's government.

A political impasse over new taxes led to civil war between Parliamentarians and Royalists in 1642. After a triumphant Parliament ordered the execution of Charles I in 1649, a faction of Puritans led by Oliver Cromwell seized power and for the next eleven years sought to impose its strict Protestant beliefs on the English people. The Puritans' grip on England loosened after the death of Cromwell in 1658 and was lost altogether when a newly elected Parliament restored the Stuarts in 1660.

Charles II (r. 1660–1685) and his brother James II (r. 1685–1688), however, also alienated their subjects through pro-French and pro-Catholic policies and disregard for Parliament. James II was a professed Catholic, and when a male heir was born in 1688, this raised the possibility of a long line of English Catholic kings. Most of his predominantly Protestant subjects found this unacceptable,

and the result was the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689. In a change that resembled a coup d'état more than a revolution, Parliament offered the Crown to James's Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange of Holland. After James mounted only token resistance and then fled the country, his son-in-law and daughter became King William III and Queen Mary II and signed the English Bill of Rights, passed by Parliament in 1689. By doing so they accepted parliamentary limitations on royal authority that became a permanent part of England's constitutional framework.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What abuses of royal power seem to have most disturbed the authors of the English Bill of Rights?
2. Were the authors most concerned with political, economic, or religious issues?
3. What role does the Bill of Rights envision for the English Crown?
4. When the Bill of Rights speaks of "rights," to whose rights does it refer?
5. In what ways might the common people of England benefit from the Bill of Rights?

Whereas the late King James the Second, by the assistance of diverse evil counselors, judges and ministers employed by him, did endeavor to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom;

By assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws without consent of Parliament;

By committing and prosecuting diverse worthy prelates for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed power;

By issuing and causing to be executed a commission under the great seal for erecting a court called the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes;¹

By levying money for and to the use of the Crown by pretense of prerogative for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by Parliament;

By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent

of Parliament, and quartering soldiers contrary to law;

By causing several good subjects being Protestants to be disarmed at the same time when papists were both armed and employed contrary to law;

By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in Parliament; . . .

And whereas of late years partial corrupt and unqualified persons have been returned and served on juries in trials, and particularly diverse jurors in trials for high treason which were not freeholders;

And excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subjects;

And excessive fines have been imposed;

And illegal and cruel punishments inflicted;

And several grants and promises made of fines and forfeitures before any conviction or judgment

¹A special royal court established to try religious cases.

against the persons upon whom the same were to be levied;

All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known laws and statutes and freedom of this realm;

And whereas the said late King James the Second having abdicated the government and the throne being thereby vacant, his Highness the prince of Orange (whom it hath pleased Almighty God to make the glorious instrument of delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power) did . . . cause letters to be written to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal being Protestants, and other letters to the several counties, cities, universities, boroughs and cinque ports,² for the choosing of such persons to represent them as were of right to be sent to Parliament, to meet and sit at Westminster upon the two and twentieth day of January in this year one thousand six hundred eighty and eight,³ in order to make such an establishment as that their religion, laws and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted, upon which letters elections having been accordingly made;

And thereupon the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons,⁴ pursuant to their respective letters and elections, being now assembled in a full and free representative of this nation, taking into their most serious consideration the best means for attaining the ends aforesaid, do in the first place (as their ancestors in like case have usually done) for the vindicating and asserting their ancient rights and liberties declare;

That the pretended power of suspending of laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal;

That the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the execution of laws by regal authority,

as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal;

That the commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious;

That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretense of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal;

That it is the right of the Subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;

That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law;

That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defense suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law;

That election of members of Parliament ought to be free;

That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;

That jurors ought to be duly impaneled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;⁵

That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction are illegal and void;

And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

And they do claim, demand and insist upon all and singular the premises as their undoubted

²Five maritime towns in southeast England that during the Middle Ages gained the right to send representatives to Parliament in return for aiding the naval defense of the realm.

³Until the eighteenth century the English new year began on March 25, not January 1; by modern reckoning the year should be 1689.

⁴The Lords Spiritual were the prelates of the Anglican Church who sat in the House of Lords; the Lords Temporal were titled peers who sat in the House of Lords; Commons refers to the House of Commons, to which nontitled Englishmen were elected.

⁵Property holders.

rights and liberties, and that no declarations, judgments, doings or proceedings to the prejudice of the people in any of the said premises ought in any wise [manner] to be drawn hereafter into consequence or example; to which demand of their rights they are particularly encouraged by the declaration of his Highness the prince of Orange as being the only means for obtaining a full redress and remedy therein. Having therefore an entire confidence that his said Highness the prince of Orange will perfect

the deliverance so far advanced by him, and will still preserve them from the violation of their rights which they have here asserted, and from all other attempts upon their religion, rights and liberties, the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons assembled at Westminster do resolve that William and Mary, prince and princess of Orange, be and be declared king and queen of England, France⁶ and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging.

⁶An anachronistic reference to the time in the Middle Ages when English kings ruled parts of France as fiefdoms and, for a time, claimed the French throne.

A Program for Revolutionary Change in France



44 ▼ *CAHIER OF THE THIRD ESTATE OF THE CITY OF PARIS*

The French Revolution began because of a problem that has plagued rulers since the beginning of organized government — King Louis XVI and his ministers could not balance their budget. In 1788, having exhausted every other solution, the king agreed to convene a meeting of the Estates General, France's representative assembly, which had last met in 1614. He hoped it would solve the government's fiscal plight by approving new taxes. The nobility, having fended off every effort to curtail its tax exemptions and privileges, saw the convening of the Estates General as an opportunity to increase its power at the expense of the monarchy. For both king and nobility the calling of the Estates General had unexpected results: The nobility lost its privileges, and the king lost most of his power and, in 1793, having been judged a traitor to the Revolution, his head.

Neither Louis nor the nobles had comprehended the French people's disgust with royal absolutism and aristocratic privilege. Nor had they sensed the degree to which the Enlightenment and the English and American revolutions had committed the people to fundamental change. Having convened in May 1789, within months the Estates General transformed itself into a National Assembly, dismantled the laws and institutions of the Old Regime, and set about creating a new political order based on constitutionalism, equality, and natural rights.

Even before the Estates General met, the French populace was in a high pitch of political excitement as a result of the procedures adopted for choosing delegates. The delegates representing the three orders of French society — the First Estate, or clergy, the Second Estate, or nobility, and the Third Estate, everyone else from peasants to wealthy city-dwellers — were to be chosen in a complicated process that began with village and neighborhood assemblies and ended at the

level of *baillages*, larger districts based on divisions in the French judicial system. At each electoral assembly, of which there were forty thousand, those attending were encouraged to draw up a *cahier de doléances*, a memorandum of grievances, in which all kinds of ideas on local and national affairs could be expressed. These would be passed on to editorial committees at the baillage level, whose members would sift through them and integrate them into final cahiers to send on to Versailles, where the Estates General would meet.

We have chosen to include excerpts from the cahier of the Third Estate of the city of Paris. A document largely created by lawyers and businessmen, it presents a fair sampling of the grievances and expectations of urban, upper-middle-class Frenchmen who, with the help of peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, and women, provided the impetus for the unfolding revolution.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How does the proposed declaration of rights in this cahier compare to the political rights outlined in the English Bill of Rights (source 43)?
2. What view of monarchy is expressed in the cahier? How does it compare with the views of monarchy expressed in the English Bill of Rights (source 43)?
3. What views are expressed in the cahier about the position of the nobility and clergy in French society?
4. It has been said that the French Revolution was about legal privilege, not monarchy. Do the thoughts expressed in this cahier bear this out?
5. What solutions does the cahier offer for the French government's fiscal crisis?
6. In what ways does this document represent the interests of the urban middle class? To what extent does it show concern for other groups in French society?
7. What kind of government does the cahier envision for France?
8. In its discussion of government, does the cahier ignore or gloss over any issues that later might prove controversial once the revolution began?

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

In every political society all men are equal in rights.

All power emanates from the nation, and can be utilized only for its wellbeing.

The general will makes the law; public might ensures its execution.

The nation alone can grant the means to support the government; it has the right to determine the amount, to limit its duration, to amend it, to determine its use, to demand an

accounting of it; and to insist on the accounting's publication.

Laws exist only to guarantee each individual's ownership of his property and the security of his person. All property is inviolable.

No citizen may be arrested or punished except by legal trial.

Every citizen has the right to be admitted to all employments, professions, and offices.

The natural, civil, and religious liberty of each man, his personal security, and his absolute independence of every authority except that of the

law, bar all enquiry into his opinions, speech, writings, and actions, so long as they do not disturb public order, and do not infringe on the rights of others.

In keeping with the declaration of rights of the nation, our delegates shall demand the end of: personal servitude; compulsory militia service; the violation of the public faith in regard to letters entrusted to the mail; and all exclusive privileges except to inventors, to whom they will be granted for a limited time only.

As a result of these principles, liberty of the press is to be granted on the condition that authors sign their writings; that the publisher be known, and that both will be held responsible for the consequences of their publications.

The declaration of these natural, civil and political rights shall become the national charter and the basis of the French government.

CONSTITUTION

In the French monarchy, legislative power belongs to the nation conjointly with the king; executive power belongs to the king alone.

No tax can be established except by the nation.

The Estates General shall meet at three-year intervals.

Any person convicted of having done anything tending to prevent the meeting of the Estates General shall be declared a traitor to the nation, guilty of high treason, and punished as such. . . .

The order and form of the convening of the Estates General and of the national representation shall be fixed by law.

Our delegates shall approve of the demand of the colony of Saint Domingue¹ to be admitted to the Estates General; they shall demand that representatives of other colonies shall also be ad-

mitted, as they are our brothers; and should share in all the advantages of the French constitution.

The monarch's person is sacred and inviolable. The succession to the throne is hereditary in the reigning family, in the male line, by order of primogeniture, to the exclusion of women and their descendants, male or female, and can only fall on a prince born French, within lawful marriage. . . .

At the beginning of each new reign the king shall swear an oath to the nation, and the nation to the king; the form of which shall be determined by the Estates General.

No citizen may be arrested, nor his home violated, by virtue of *lettres de cachet*,² or any other order emanating from the executive power, . . . all persons who have solicited, countersigned, and executed them being subject to special prosecution and corporal punishment. . . .

The whole kingdom will be divided into provincial assemblies, made up of people who live in the province, elected freely by all the orders. . . .

Public administration, in all matters having to do with the allocation and collection of taxes, agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, communications, public works projects, construction, and public morals shall be entrusted to the provincial assemblies.

Cities, towns, and villages shall likewise have elected municipal authorities which, like the assemblies, shall administer local affairs.

Judicial authority shall be exercised in France in the name of the king by tribunals composed of members completely independent of any act by the executive power.

Nobles will be able to participate in commerce and other useful professions without losing their status.³ The Estates General shall establish a civic

¹Saint Domingue was a French colony on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, acquired by treaty from Spain in 1697. At the time of the revolution, its population of 520,000 consisted of 450,000 slaves and 30,000 mulattos. The remaining 40,000 were whites of French extraction.

²Literally "sealed letters;" a form of warrant issued under the king's signature for arbitrary arrest and imprisonment in prerevolutionary France.

³According to French law, members of the nobility lost their noble status if they participated in business activities involving commerce, manufacturing, and banking, all considered "middle class" professions. Nobles were expected to derive their income from landholding, investments, or government service.

and honorary award, personal and not hereditary, which will be conferred by the king without discrimination on citizens of any order who merit it by the loftiness of their patriotic virtue and by the importance of their public service.

The charter of the constitution shall be engraved on a public monument raised for this purpose. A reading of it shall be made to the king at the ascension to his throne, and then shall be followed by his oath. . . . All agents of the executive power, civil and military, all judicial magistrates, all municipal officers shall swear an oath to uphold the charter. Every year on the anniversary of its approval, the charter shall be read and posted in the churches, courts, schools, and at the headquarters of each regiment and on naval vessels. The day will be a day of solemn celebration in every country under French dominion.

FINANCES

The Estates General shall void every special tax, on persons or on property, such as the *taille*, the *franc-fief*, head tax, military service, the *corvée*,⁴ the billeting of troops, and others, and replace them as needed by general taxes, payable by all citizens of every order.

The Estates General in the outright replacement of taxes, shall consider principally direct taxes, which will bear equally on all citizens and all provinces and which will be simplest and less expensive to collect.

AGRICULTURE

The deputies will be especially charged to demand the total abolition of *capitaineries*;⁵ they are in such contradiction to every principle of mo-

rality that they cannot be tolerated, even under the pretext of getting rid of some of their worst abuses.

It is the natural right of any proprietor of land to be able to destroy on his land destructive game and other animals.⁶ In regard to hunting rights and the means of employing them, whether for their suppression or preservation, we look to the Estates General to suppress their abuses in a timely manner.

LEGISLATION

The object of the laws is to protect liberty and property. Their perfection is to be humane and just, clear and general, to be in keeping with the national character and morality, to protect people of every order and every class equally, and to punish without distinction of persons whoever violates the law.

TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS

No citizen can be arrested or obliged to appear before any judge without an order coming from a competent judge. Every accused person, even before his first interrogation, shall have the right to call a lawyer.

A law will be passed to suppress the use of all torture before a criminal is executed and all practices that add prolonged and cruel suffering to the execution.

The death penalty should be limited to the smallest number of cases as possible, and reserved for truly atrocious crimes.

Those guilty of the same crime, no matter what order of society they are from, should undergo the same punishment.

⁴*Taille*: a tax on land paid mainly by peasants; *franc-fief*: a fee paid by a nonnoble on the acquisition of land; *corvée*: unpaid labor demanded mainly from peasants by their landlords.

⁵Hunting monopolies granted mainly to members of the high nobility.

⁶Laws prevented peasants from destroying crop-damaging birds and rabbits; their purpose was to protect the supply of animals hunted by the nobility.

Prisons should have the purpose not of punishing prisoners but of securing their persons. Underground dungeons should be suppressed. Efforts should be made to make the interior of other prisons healthier, and to establish rules for the moral conduct of the prisoners.

The Estates General should consider the plight of black slaves and men of color, in the colonies as well as in France.

RELIGION

[Religion's] ministers, as citizens of the state, are subject to the law; as property owners, they must bear a share of all public expenditure.

The Christian religion ordains civil toleration; every citizen must enjoy private liberty of conscience, but the requirements of law and order require only one dominant religion. . . .

Women's Issues on the Eve of the French Revolution



45 ▼ *PETITION OF PARISIAN WOMEN OF THE THIRD ESTATE TO LOUIS XVI*

Aside from its undisputed importance in political and legal history, the French Revolution has a special place in the history of feminism. To a degree without precedent, French women, especially in the early 1790s, ceased being passive observers of political developments and became active participants in the revolutionary process. Their most dramatic act took place on October 5, 1789, when approximately seven thousand Parisian women marched to Versailles, where they invaded the royal apartments and demanded that the king address issues of unemployment, inflation, and shortages of bread. In response to their demands and threats (some demonstrators threatened to "rip out the queen's heart and fricassee her liver") the royal family and the National Assembly moved to Paris, where, in this city's politically charged atmosphere, the Revolution unfolded. Women's involvement was not limited to this one notable act. Women helped storm the Paris Bastille in July 1789, wrote revolutionary manifestos, organized women's political clubs, engaged in political debates, wrote letters to newspapers, and rioted both for and against the Revolution.

Many female revolutionaries saw the upheaval in France as more than an opportunity to eradicate absolutism and aristocratic privilege. They demanded that the Revolution's leaders consider issues that pertained uniquely to women — marriage and divorce, education, inheritance laws, vocational opportunities, and female political rights. A few of the women's political clubs demanded women's rights to bear arms and fight in the revolutionary armies. Female activism declined after 1793 when Jacobin leaders in the National Convention outlawed women's political clubs and denied women the right to speak in political assemblies. The regime instituted after the fall of the Jacobins in 1794, known as the Directory, revoked much earlier legislation that had favored women's rights. In 1804 the Napoleonic Code once more legalized the dominance of husbands over wives and curtailed married women's control of their wages, property, and

inheritance. Despite these setbacks, the women revolutionaries raised issues that would not go away. The ground had been prepared for the feminist movements that flourished in Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The following petition was written in January 1789 by a group of Parisian women of the Third Estate. Although unable to vote in the election of delegates to the Estates General and excluded from the process of drawing up the *cahiers de doléances*, these women, no less than their male counterparts, had hopes for revolutionary change.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The authors of the petition chose to address their concerns to the king rather than the Estates General. Why?
2. What attitudes toward men are stated or implied in the petition?
3. According to the petition, what laws and social customs of France determine women's vocational and matrimonial prospects?
4. What specific steps do the authors hope the king will take on their behalf?
5. If these steps are taken, what kind of future do these women envision for themselves in France?
6. How does the tone and political rhetoric of the women's petition resemble and differ from that of the cahier of the Paris Third Estate, a document written by men (see source 45)?
7. What guesses can be made about the status and educational background of the women who wrote this petition?

Sire,

At a time when the various orders of the state are busy with their interests, when everyone is trying to assert his titles and his rights, when some people are worrying about recalling centuries of servitude and anarchy, when others are making every effort to shake off the last links which still bind them to the imperious remains of the feudal system, women — continual objects of the admiration and scorn of men — women, wouldn't it be possible for them also to make their voices heard amidst this general agitation?

Excluded from the national assemblies by laws too well consolidated for them to hope to break, they do not ask, Sire, for your permission to send

their deputies to the Estates General; they know too well how great a role interest would play in an election and how easy it would be for the representatives to impede the freedom of the votes.

We prefer, Sire, to place our cause at your feet; not wishing to obtain anything except from your heart, we address our complaints and confide our miseries to it.

The women of the Third Estate are almost all born without fortune; their education is very neglected or very defective: it consists in their being sent to schools at the house of a teacher who himself does not know the first word of the language he is teaching. They continue going there until they are able to read the service of the Mass in French and Vespers¹ in Latin. Hav-

¹A Catholic religious service in the late afternoon or evening, consisting of hymns, scriptural readings, and prayers.

ing fulfilled the first duties of religion, they are taught to work; having reached the age of fifteen or sixteen, they can make five or six *sous*² a day. If nature has refused them beauty, they get married without dowry³ to unfortunate artisans, lead aimless, difficult lives stuck away in the provinces, and give birth to children they are incapable of raising. If, on the contrary, they are born pretty, without culture, without principles, without any idea of morals, they become the prey of the first seducer, commit a first sin, come to Paris to bury their shame, end by losing it altogether, and die victims of licentious ways.

Today, when the difficulty of subsisting forces thousands of them to put themselves up for auction, when men find it easier to buy them for a spell than to win them over forever, those whom a happy penchant inclines to virtue, who are consumed by the desire to learn, who feel themselves led by a natural taste, who have overcome the deficiencies of their education and know a little of everything without having learned anything, those, to conclude, whom a haughty soul, a noble heart, a pride of sentiment cause to be called *prudent*, are forced to throw themselves into cloisters where only a modest dowry is required, or forced to hire themselves out when they do not have enough courage, enough heroism, to share the generous devotion of the daughters of Vincent de Paul.⁴

Also, several, solely because they are born girls, are disdained by their parents, who refuse to set them up, preferring to concentrate their fortune on the head of a son whom they designate to carry on their name in the capital; for it is good that Your Majesty understands that we also have names to keep up. Or, if old age finds them spinsters, they spend it in tears and see themselves the object of the scorn of their nearest relatives.

To prevent so many ills, Sire, we ask that men not be allowed, under any pretext, to exercise trades that are the prerogative of women — such as seamstress, embroiderer, *marchande de mode*,⁵ etc., etc.; if we are left at least with the needle and the spindle, we promise never to handle the compass or the square.

We ask, Sire, that your benevolence provide us with the means of putting to use the talents with which nature will have furnished us, notwithstanding the impediments which are forever being placed on our education.

May you assign us positions, which we alone will be able to fill, which we will occupy only after having passed a strict examination, after trustworthy inquiries concerning the purity of our morals.

We ask to be enlightened, to have work, not in order to usurp men's authority, but in order to be better esteemed by them, so that we might have the means of living out of the way of misfortune and so that poverty does not force the weakest among us, who are blinded by luxury and swept along by example, to join the crown of unfortunate beings who overpopulate the streets and whose debauched audacity is a disgrace to our sex and to the men who keep them company.

We would want this class of women to wear a mark of identification. Today, when they go so far as to adopt the modesty of our dress, when they mingle everywhere in all kinds of clothing, we often find ourselves taken for them; some men are mistaken and make us blush because of their scorn. It would be necessary that under pain of having to work in the public workshops for the benefit of the poor (it is known that work is the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on them), they never be able to remove this mark.

²Figuratively, a tiny amount of money; a few cents.

³Money or goods that a woman brings to her husband at the time of marriage. In prerevolutionary France the money would be controlled by the husband but returned to the woman if she became a widow. Without a dowry a young woman's chances of marrying were severely diminished.

⁴The Daughters of Charity, a religious order founded in 1633 by the French religious leader St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), was noted for its work among the poor and orphans.

⁵One who makes or sells women's hats.

... [*sic*] However, it occurs to us that the empire of fashion would be destroyed and one would run the risk of seeing many too many women dressed in the same color.

We implore you, Sire, to set up free schools where we could learn our language on the basis of principles [and] religion and ethics. May one and the other be offered to us in all their grandeur, entirely stripped of the petty applications which attenuate their majesty; may our hearts be formed there; may we be taught above all to practice the virtues of our sex: gentleness, modesty, patience, charity; as for the arts that please, women learn them without teachers. Sciences? ... They serve only to inspire us with a stupid pride, lead us to pedantry, go against the desires of nature, make of us mixed beings who are rarely faithful wives and still more rarely good mothers of families.

We ask to come out of the state of ignorance, to be able to give our children a sound and reasonable education so as to make of them subjects worthy of serving you. We will teach them to cherish the beautiful name of Frenchmen; we will transmit to them the love we have for Your Majesty, for we are willing to leave valor and genius to men, but we will challenge them over the dangerous and precious gift of sensitivity; we defy them to love you better than we; they run to Versailles,⁶ most of them for their interests, and when we, Sire, see you there, with difficulty and with pounding hearts, and are able to gaze for an instant upon your August Person, tears flow from our eyes. The idea of Majesty, of Sovereign, vanishes, as we see in you only a tender Father, for whom we would sacrifice our lives a thousand times.

⁶The French royal residence, the construction of which was begun during the reign of Louis XIV in the 1680s.

Anticolonialism and Revolution in the Americas

Despite the many contrasts between the British colonies of eastern North America and the Portuguese-Spanish colonies of Mexico and Central and South America, all of them won independence from European rule between the 1770s and the 1830s. Although the independence movements in North and Latin America unfolded differently, throughout the Americas the rebels had similar grievances and ideals. Grievances included mercantilist restrictions on trade, high taxes, and a lack of self-government; the ideals were provided by English constitutionalism, the Enlightenment, and, in the case of Latin America, the revolutions in North America and France.

The governments that emerged after the revolutions differed markedly. In the northern thirteen colonies, opponents of British rule coalesced in a unified movement under the Continental Congress and George Washington, and after independence this unity was ultimately preserved in the U.S. Constitution. In South America, where struggles for independence were waged on a regional basis under generals such as Simón Bolívar, Bernardo O'Higgins, and José de San Martín, the departure of Spain and Portugal resulted in more than a dozen independent states. In North America, federal and state governments drew on the principles

of English constitutionalism to guarantee basic freedoms and extend political rights to a majority of adult white males. In Latin America, with its traditions of Spanish/Portuguese absolutism and aristocracy, wealthy landowners controlled the new states and excluded the peasant masses from politics.

Social and economic relationships also differed markedly in the postcolonial era. Although the new U.S. government preserved slavery and continued to restrict women's legal and political rights, property holding was widespread. A fluid class structure and economic expansion ensured that not just the political elite but the common people too would benefit from independence. In Latin America, however, continuation of the colonial class structure meant that the economic and social chasm between the mass of propertyless Indian peasants and the narrow elite of white property owners remained. Even more so than in North America, the independence movement in Latin America transformed political relationships but was not a true revolution.

“Simple Facts, Plain Arguments, and Common Sense”

46 ▼ *Thomas Paine, COMMON SENSE*

After more than a decade of growing tension over taxes, British imperial policy, the power of colonial legislatures, and a host of other emotionally charged issues, in April 1775 the American Revolution began with the clash between British regulars and American militiamen at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. In May the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen took Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, and in June the British defeated colonial troops in the Battle of Bunker Hill outside of Boston but at the cost of more than a thousand casualties.

Despite these events, in the summer and fall of 1775 most Americans still hoped reconciliation with Great Britain was possible. They were convinced that evil ministers, not the king, were responsible for British policy and that views of conciliatory British politicians such as Edmund Burke would prevail. Then in January 1776 there appeared in Philadelphia a thirty-five page pamphlet entitled *Common Sense* written by Thomas Paine (1737–1809), a bankrupt one-time corset-maker, sailor, tobacconist, and minor customs official, who had immigrated to Pennsylvania from England only fourteen months earlier to escape debtor's prison. Despite his background, Paine produced what was far and away the most brilliant political pamphlet written during the American Revolution, and perhaps ever in the English language.

Within three months *Common Sense* sold more than one hundred thousand copies, one for every four or five adult males in the colonies. It “burst from the press,” wrote Benjamin Rush, the Pennsylvania physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, “with an effect which has rarely been produced in any age or country.” Written with passion and vivid imagery, Paine's pamphlet brought into focus American reservations about England and the European world and

expressed American aspirations for creating a newer, freer, more open society as an independent nation. It accelerated the move toward the events of July 2, 1776, when the delegates to the Second Continental Congress created the United States of America, and of July 4, when they signed the Declaration of Independence.

During the Revolutionary War Paine fought in Washington's army and composed pamphlets to bolster American spirits. In the late 1780s he returned to England but in 1792 was forced to flee to France after his public support of the French Revolution led to his indictment for sedition. Chosen as a delegate to the French National Convention (although he knew no French), Paine was later imprisoned for ten months during the Reign of Terror, and on release resided with James Monroe, the American ambassador to France. While in France he attacked Christianity in his pamphlet *The Age of Reason*, the notoriety of which was such that on his return to the United States in 1802 he was vilified as an atheist. Impoverished and disgraced, he died unheralded in New York City in 1809.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are Paine's views of the origins and defects of monarchy as a form of government and hereditary succession as a principle of government?
2. What are his views of King George III?
3. What characteristics does Paine ascribe to Great Britain in general and the British government in particular? How might his background explain his negative views?
4. How does Paine counter the arguments of Americans who still sought reconciliation with Great Britain?
5. Despite Paine's rejection of the British government, do his ideas in *Common Sense* owe a debt to the principles of the English Bill of Rights?
6. What is there about the pamphlet's language, tone, and arguments that might explain its enormous popularity?

REMARKS ON THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature which no art can overturn, viz. that the more simple anything is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered; and with this maxim in view, I offer a few remarks on the so much boasted constitution of England. That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected, is granted. When the world was overrun with tyranny, the least remove therefrom was

a glorious rescue. But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to promise, is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (though the disgrace of human nature) have this advantage with them, they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs; know likewise the remedy; and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies; some will say in one and some in

another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

An inquiry into the *constitutional errors* in the English form of government is at this time highly necessary; for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man who is attached to a prostitute is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in favor of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.

OF MONARCHY AND HEREDITARY SUCCESSION

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings, and the Christian world has improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones.¹ How impious is the title of sacred Majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust! . . .

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of rights, is an insult and imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no *one* by *birth* could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others forever, and though himself might deserve *some* decent degree of honors of his contemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. . . .

Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honors than were bestowed upon him, so the givers of those honors could have no

power to give away the right of posterity, and though they might say "we choose you for our head," they could not without manifest injustice to their children say "that your children and your children's children shall reign over our's forever." Because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might perhaps, in the next succession put them under the government of a rogue or a fool. . . .

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honorable origin; whereas it is more than probable that, could we take off the dark covering of antiquity and trace them to their first rise, we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang. . . . England, since the conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones; yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one. A French bastard, landing with an armed banditti and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. . . .

The most plausible plea which hath ever been offered in favor of hereditary succession is that it preserves a nation from civil wars; and were this true, it would be weighty; whereas, it is the most barefaced falsity ever imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the conquest, in which time there have been (including the Revolution) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions. Wherefore instead of making for peace, it makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand upon. . . .

In short, monarchy and succession have laid (not this or that kingdom only) but the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the word of god bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

¹The reference is to the theory of divine right monarchy, which asserted that kings were God's specially chosen lieutenants to rule his subjects, and were even in some limited sense divine figures themselves.

tenants to rule his subjects, and were even in some limited sense divine figures themselves.

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the king, and the continent has accepted the challenge. . . .

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom; but of a continent — of at least one-eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time by the proceedings now. Now is the seedtime of continental union, faith, and honor. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters. . . .

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness. . . . Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for

I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed² us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz., for the sake of trade and dominion. . . .

We have boasted the protection of Great Britain without considering that her motive was *interest*, not *attachment*; and that she did not protect us from *our enemies* on *our account*, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, and who will always be our enemies on the *same account*. . . .

As I have always considered the independency of this continent an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event cannot be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England forever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons.

First. The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative³ over the whole legislation of this continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate en-

²To occupy with troops.

³A veto.

emy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper person to say to these colonies, *You shall make no laws but what I please!* . . .

Secondly. That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things in the interim will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and who is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance; and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent. . . .

If there is any true cause of fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out. Wherefore, as an opening into that business I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming that I have no other opinion of them myself than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. . . .

Let the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal, their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a continental congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of delegates to congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The whole number in congress will be at least 390. Each congress to sit and to choose a president by the following method. When the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot, after which let the congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the delegates of that province. In the next congress, let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former congress, and so pro-

ceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three fifths of the congress to be called a majority. He that will promote discord, under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt. . . .

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Great Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the Word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law *ought* to BE king, and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is. . . .

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. . . .

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Bolívar's Dreams for Latin America



47 ▼ *Simón Bolívar, THE JAMAICA LETTER*

Simón Bolívar, proclaimed “Liberator” by his own people and the most renowned leader of the Latin American independence movement, was born to a wealthy Venezuelan landowning family in 1783. Orphaned at an early age, he was educated by a private tutor who inspired in his pupil an enthusiasm for the principles of the Enlightenment and republicanism. After spending three years in Europe, Bolívar returned to New Spain in 1803, where the death of his new bride plunged him into grief and caused his return to France and Italy. In 1805 in Rome he took a vow to dedicate his life to the liberation of his native land. On his return he became a leading member of the republican-minded group in Caracas that in 1808 began to agitate for independence and in 1810 deposed the colonial governor. Until his death in 1830, Bolívar dedicated himself to the Latin American independence movement as a publicist, diplomat, theoretician, and statesman. His greatest contribution was as the general who led the armies that defeated the Spaniards and liberated the northern regions of South America.

The so-called Jamaica Letter was written in 1815 during a self-imposed exile in Jamaica. It was addressed to “an English gentleman,” probably the island’s governor, the Duke of Manchester. The Venezuelan Republic had collapsed in May as a result of a viciously fought Spanish counteroffensive, divisions among the revolutionaries, and opposition from many Indians, blacks, and mulattos, who viewed the Creole landowners, not the Spaniards, as their oppressors. The letter was written in response to a request from the Englishman for Bolívar’s insights into the background and prospects of the liberation movement.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Why does Bolívar believe that Spain’s efforts to hold on to its American territories are doomed?
2. What Spanish policies, according to Bolívar, have made Spanish rule odious to him and other revolutionaries?
3. In Bolívar’s view, what complicates the task of predicting Spanish America’s political future?
4. Does Bolívar’s letter reveal concern for the economic and social condition of South America’s nonwhite population? What are some of the implications of Bolívar’s attitudes?
5. Based on your reading of Bolívar, what guesses can you make about the reasons why the new nations of South America found it difficult to achieve stable republican governments?

With what a feeling of gratitude I read that passage in your letter in which you say to me: "I hope that the success which then followed Spanish arms may now turn in favor of their adversaries, the badly oppressed people of South America." I take this hope as a prediction, if it is justice that determines man's contests. Success will crown our efforts, because the destiny of America has been irrevocably decided; the tie that bound her to Spain has been severed. Only a concept maintained that tie and kept the parts of that immense monarchy together. That which formerly bound them now divides them. The hatred that the Peninsula¹ inspired in us is greater than the ocean between us. It would be easier to have the two continents meet than to reconcile the spirits of the two countries. The habit of obedience; a community of interest, of understanding, of religion; mutual goodwill; a tender regard for the birthplace and good name of our forefathers; in short, all that gave rise to our hopes, came to us from Spain. As a result there was born a principle of affinity that seemed eternal, notwithstanding the misbehavior of our rulers which weakened that sympathy, or, rather, that bond enforced by the domination of their rule. At present the contrary attitude persists: we are threatened with the fear of death, dishonor, and every harm; there is nothing we have not suffered at the hands of that unnatural step-mother — Spain. The veil has been torn asunder. We have already seen the light, and it is not our desire to be thrust back into darkness. . . . For this reason America fights desperately, and seldom has desperation failed to achieve victory. . . .

It is . . . difficult to foresee the future fate of the New World, to set down its political principles, or to prophesy what manner of government it will adopt. . . . We inhabit a world apart, separated by broad seas. We are young in the ways of almost all the arts and sciences, although, in a certain manner, we are old in the ways of

civilized society. . . . But we scarcely retain a vestige of what once was; we are, moreover, neither Indian nor European, but a species midway between the legitimate proprietors of this country and the Spanish usurpers. In short, though Americans by birth we derive our rights from Europe, and we have to assert these rights against the rights of the natives, and at the same time we must defend ourselves against the invaders. This places us in a most extraordinary and involved situation. . . .

The role of the inhabitants of the American hemisphere has for centuries been purely passive. Politically they were non-existent. We are still in a position lower than slavery, and therefore it is more difficult for us to rise to the enjoyment of freedom. . . . States are slaves because of either the nature or the misuse of their constitutions; a people is therefore enslaved when the government, by its nature or its vices, infringes on and usurps the rights of the citizen or subject. Applying these principles, we find that America was denied not only its freedom but even an active and effective tyranny. Under absolutism there are no recognized limits to the exercise of governmental powers. The will of the great sultan, khan, bey, and other despotic rulers is the supreme law, carried out more or less arbitrarily by the lesser pashas, khans, and satraps of Turkey and Persia, who have an organized system of oppression in which inferiors participate according to the authority vested in them. To them is entrusted the administration of civil, military, political, religious, and tax matters. But, after all is said and done, the rulers of Isfahan are Persians; the viziers of the Grand Turk are Turks; and the sultans of Tartary are Tartars. . . .

How different is our situation! We have been harassed by a conduct which has not only deprived us of our rights but has kept us in a sort of permanent infancy with regard to public affairs. If we could at least have managed our domestic affairs and our internal administration,

¹Refers to the Iberian Peninsula, consisting of Spain and Portugal.

we could have acquainted ourselves with the processes and mechanics of public affairs. . . .

Americans today, and perhaps to a greater extent than ever before, who live within the Spanish system occupy a position in society no better than that of serfs destined for labor, or at best they have no more status than that of mere consumers. Yet even this status is surrounded with galling restrictions, such as being forbidden to grow European crops, or to store products which are royal monopolies, or to establish factories of a type the Peninsula itself does not possess. To this add the exclusive trading privileges, even in articles of prime necessity, and the barriers between American provinces, designed to prevent all exchange of trade, traffic, and understanding. In short, do you wish to know what our future held? — simply the cultivation of the fields of indigo, grain, coffee, sugar cane, cacao, and cotton; cattle raising on the broad plains; hunting wild game in the jungles; digging in the earth to mine its gold — but even these limitations could never satisfy the greed of Spain.

So negative was our existence that I can find nothing comparable in any other civilized society, examine as I may the entire history of time and the politics of all nations. Is it not an outrage and a violation of human rights to expect a land so splendidly endowed, so vast, rich, and populous, to remain merely passive?

As I have just explained, we were cut off and, as it were, removed from the world in relation to the science of government and administration of the state. We were never viceroys or governors, save in the rarest of instances; seldom archbishops and bishops; diplomats never; as military men, only subordinates; as nobles, without royal privileges. In brief, we were neither magistrates nor financiers and seldom merchants — all in flagrant contradiction to our institutions. . . .

It is harder, Montesquieu² has written, to release a nation from servitude than to enslave a

free nation. This truth is proven by the annals of all times, which reveal that most free nations have been put under the yoke, but very few enslaved nations have recovered their liberty. Despite the convictions of history, South Americans have made efforts to obtain liberal, even perfect, institutions, doubtless out of that instinct to aspire to the greatest possible happiness, which, common to all men, is bound to follow in civil societies founded on the principles of justice, liberty, and equality. But are we capable of maintaining in proper balance the difficult charge of a republic? Is it conceivable that a newly emancipated people can soar to the heights of liberty, and, unlike Icarus, neither have its wings melt nor fall into an abyss? Such a marvel is inconceivable and without precedent. There is no reasonable probability to bolster our hopes.

More than anyone, I desire to see America fashioned into the greatest nation in the world, greatest not so much by virtue of her area and wealth as by her freedom and glory. Although I seek perfection for the government of my country, I cannot persuade myself that the New World can, at the moment, be organized as a great republic. Since it is impossible, I dare not desire it; yet much less do I desire to have all America a monarchy because this plan is not only impracticable but also impossible. Wrongs now existing could not be righted, and our emancipation would be fruitless. The American states need the care of paternal governments to heal the sores and wounds of despotism and war. . . .

From the foregoing, we can draw these conclusions: The American provinces are fighting for their freedom, and they will ultimately succeed. Some provinces as a matter of course will form federal and some central republics; the larger areas will inevitably establish monarchies, some of which will fare so badly that they will disintegrate in either present or future revolu-

²Montesquieu (1689–1755) was a French philosopher, historian, and jurist best known for his *Spirit of the Laws* (1755) and his theory that the powers of government —

executive, legislative, and judicial — must be separated to ensure individual freedom.

tions. To consolidate a great monarchy will be no easy task, but it will be utterly impossible to consolidate a great republic.

It is a grandiose idea to think of consolidating the New World into a single nation, united by pacts into a single bond. It is reasoned that, as these parts have a common origin, language, customs, and religion, they ought to have a single government to permit the newly formed states to unite in a confederation. But this is not possible. . . .

When success is not assured, when the state is weak, and when results are distantly seen, all men hesitate; opinion is divided, passions rage, and the enemy fans these passions in order to win an easy victory because of them. As soon as we are strong and under the guidance of a liberal nation which will lend us her protection, we will achieve accord in cultivating the virtues and talents that lead to glory. Then will we march majestically toward that great prosperity for which South America is destined. . . .

Chapter 9

Africa, Southwest Asia, and India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Around 1600, Southwest Asia and India, dominated by three large and powerful states, the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, would seem to have had little in common with Africa, with its hundreds of kingdoms, confederations, chiefdoms, and city-states and extensive regions with no formal states whatsoever. South and Southwest Asia, moreover, had but two major religions, Hinduism and Islam, while Africa had many religious faiths, including Christianity in Ethiopia, Islam in the Sudan, the Mediterranean north, and the east coast, and numerous varieties of animism throughout the continent. In comparison to Africa, India and Southwest Asia were more densely populated and more urbanized, and had more commercial and cultural contacts with Europe and East Asia.

Despite these many differences, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Africa and South and Southwest Asia had a number of broad similarities. Both areas, for example, experienced increasing political instability and witnessed the decline, and in some cases disappearance, of once formidable states. Political deterioration was most striking in Asia, where the Persian Safavid Empire collapsed and disappeared in the 1730s, and the Mughal Empire was reduced to impotence and irrelevancy by the mid 1700s. The Ottoman Empire survived, but with shrunken borders, a demoralized populace, and an army that was a pale shadow of the force that had gone from victory to victory in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Africa too had its examples of political disintegration. The Songhai Empire in the western Sudan fell apart after a major defeat by invading Moroccans in 1591. The Kingdom of Monomotapa in southeast Africa had a similar fate after 1685 when it was overrun by a former client state, the Changamire Kingdom. Other African states slowly declined. These included Ethiopia, the Christian kingdom in east Africa; Benin, one of the great West African forest kingdoms; and Kanem-Bornu, in the central Sudan. Political weakness in Africa was not universal, with new states such as Dahomey, the Asante Confederation, and Oyo becoming formidable and many peoples throughout the continent preserving traditional chieftainships and clan relationships. Overall, however, African political life became less stable and more subject to conflict in the 1600s and 1700s.

Africa, India, and Southwest Asia also shared the experience of becoming more fully integrated into the global economy. Although some groups and individuals benefited from this development, its overall impact in both regions was negative. In India and Southwest Asia, increased trade with Europe brought new and cheaper goods but also widespread inflation and economic ruin for many thousands of artisans. Political corruption, oppressive taxes, rebellion, and warfare further damaged these regions' economies. In Africa, trade boomed on the west coast, but it came at great cost. Its most important commodities were human beings, whose capture, sale, and enslavement in the Americas destabilized African politics and degraded millions of human beings.

In all these regions European pressure increased in the 1600s and 1700s. In 1652, a small group of Dutch farmers arrived at the southern tip of Africa and established the first permanent European settlement on the continent. During the eighteenth century the descendants of these settlers pushed inland, and their appetite for land and slaves led to a series of wars with the Bantu who lived in the interior. A century later in India officials of the British East India Company took advantage of the Mughal Empire's disintegration and established its political authority in Bengal in northeast India and in regions of India's east coast. From this base the British extended their control of the whole subcontinent in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile on Africa's west coast Europeans were orchestrating a dramatic increase in the transatlantic slave trade in response to demands for slaves from sugar growers in Brazil and the West Indies. Over six million Africans were transported to the Americas as slaves in the 1700s. On Africa's east coast, where slaving had been insignificant, Dutch,

Portuguese, Arab, and especially French merchants by the end of the eighteenth century were selling many thousands of Africans per year to customers in Arabia, India, and French-controlled islands in the Indian Ocean. This spectacular growth of the slave trade underlined Africa's vulnerability in an age of growing global interaction.

Africa's Curse: The Slave Trade

Slavery has been practiced throughout history, in every corner of the globe and as part of every conceivable social-economic system. Slavery has existed in small farming villages in China and in great imperial cities such as ancient Rome; it has been practiced by pastoral nomads, plantation owners, rulers of empires, and modern totalitarian dictators. Slavery was mentioned in ancient Sumerian law codes during the fourth millennium B.C.E., and is still the lot of millions of human beings today despite its official condemnation by most of the world's governments.

In recent history slavery most affected the people of Africa, who became a source of unpaid labor in many parts of the world, especially the Americas. The Atlantic slave trade began in the fifteenth century under the Portuguese, who at first made small shipments of Africans to Portugal to serve as domestics and then larger shipments to the Canary Islands, the Madeiras, and São Tomé to work on sugar plantations. By 1500, approximately five hundred slaves were exported each year. That number did not grow appreciably until the mid 1500s, when the plantation system was established in Brazil and subsequently spread to Spanish America, the West Indies, and British North America. By the eighteenth century, when Great Britain became the leading purveyor of slaves, the transatlantic slave trade peaked, with more than six million slaves transported to the Americas.

Almost every aspect of modern African slavery is the subject of debate among historians. Did the enslavement of Africans result from racism, or were Africans enslaved because they were available and convenient to the market across the Atlantic? Did the loss of millions of individuals to slavery over five hundred years have serious or minimal demographic consequences for Africa? Was the political instability of various African states linked to the slave trade or other factors? Did reliance on selling slaves to Europeans impede Africa's economic development? Did European governments abolish the slave trade because of humanitarianism and religious convictions or hard-headed economic calculation?

One thing is certain. For the millions of Africans who were captured, shackled, wrenched from their families, branded, sold, packed into the holds of ships, sold once more, and put to work in American mines and fields, enslavement meant pain, debasement, and horror. For them, slavery was an unmitigated and terrible curse.

The Path to Enslavement in America



48 ▼ *Olaudah Equiano;* *THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE* *OF THE LIFE OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO* *WRITTEN BY HIMSELF*

Olaudah Equiano (1745?–1797) was born in Iboland, an area east of the Niger delta that today is part of southern Nigeria. Captured and sold into slavery when he was about eleven, during his teens he served several masters, including Michael Henry Pascal, a lieutenant in the British navy, and Robert King, a Quaker merchant from Philadelphia. Equiano accompanied Pascal on several naval campaigns during the Seven Years' War and, after having been sold to King, made a dozen voyages between London and the West Indies. He learned English, enabling him to pursue a career as a shipping clerk and navigator in England after King granted his freedom in the late 1760s. In the 1770s he joined the English abolitionist movement, speaking out against slavery in lecture tours that took him to dozens of cities in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

English abolitionists supported the publication of his autobiography, which went through eight editions after it appeared in 1789. Although written to turn the English public against the slave trade, Equiano's account of his experiences seems generally accurate and balanced. He describes the cruelties of the white slave traders as well as the acts of kindness of his white masters and English friends. He shows pride in his African ancestry but denounces the Africans who bought and sold slaves. In the following excerpt, Equiano describes his harsh introduction to slavery.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. On the basis of Equiano's account, describe the role of Africans in the slave trade.
2. What does Equiano's account reveal about the effect of slavery and the slave trade on African society?
3. What were the characteristics of slavery that Equiano encountered?
4. Once aboard the slave ship, what in the slaves' experiences contributed to their despair and demoralization, according to Equiano?
5. What factors might have contributed to the brutal treatment of the slaves by the ship's crew?

TAKEN CAPTIVE

Generally when the grown people in the neighborhood were gone far in the fields to labor, the children assembled together in some of the neighbors' premises to play, and commonly some of us used to get up a tree to look out for any assailant or kidnapper that might come upon us, for they sometimes took those opportunities of our parents' absence to attack and carry off as many as they could seize. . . . One day, when all our people were gone out to their work as usual and only I and my dear sister were left to mind the house, two men and a woman got over our walls, and in a moment seized us both, and without giving us time to cry out or make resistance they stopped our mouths and ran off with us into the nearest wood. . . .

For a long time we had kept to the woods, but at last we came into a road which I believed I knew. I had now some hopes of being delivered, for we had advanced but a little way before I discovered some people at a distance, on which I began to cry out for their assistance: but my cries had no other effect than to make them tie me faster and stop my mouth, and then they put me into a large sack. They also stopped my sister's mouth and tied her hands, and in this manner we proceeded till we were out of the sight of these people. When we went to rest the following night they offered us some victuals, but we refused it, and the only comfort we had was in being in one another's arms all that night and bathing each other with our tears. But alas! we were soon deprived of even the small comfort of weeping together. The next day proved a day of greater sorrow than I had yet experienced, for my sister and I were then separated while we lay clasped in each other's arms. It was in vain that we besought them not to part us; she was torn from me and immediately carried away, while I was left in a state of distraction not to be described. I cried and grieved continually, and for several days I did not eat anything but what they forced into my mouth. At length, after many days' traveling, during which I had often changed

masters, I got into the hands of a chieftain in a very pleasant country. This man had two wives and some children, and they all used me extremely well and did all they could to comfort me, particularly the first wife, who was something like my mother. . . . This first master of mine, as I may call him, was a smith, and my principal employment was working his bellows, which were the same kind as I had seen in my vicinity. . . . I believe it was gold he worked, for it was of a lovely bright yellow color and was worn by the women on their wrists and ankles. I was there I suppose about a month, and they at last used to trust me some little distance from the house. This liberty I used in embracing every opportunity to inquire the way to my own home: and I also sometimes, for the same purpose, went with the maidens in the cool of the evenings to bring pitchers of water from the springs for the use of the house.

▷ Equiano escapes but, terrified of being alone in the forest at night, returns to his household.

Soon after this my master's only daughter and child by his first wife sickened and died, which affected him so much that for some time he was almost frantic, and really would have killed himself had he not been watched and prevented. However, in a small time afterwards he recovered and I was again sold. I was now carried to the left of the sun's rising, through many different countries and a number of large woods. The people I was sold to used to carry me very often when I was tired either on their shoulders or on their backs. I saw many convenient well-built sheds along the roads at proper distances, to accommodate the merchants and travelers who lay in those buildings along with their wives, who often accompany them; and they always go well armed.

▷ Equiano encounters his sister, but they are again quickly separated.

I was now more miserable, if possible, than before. The small relief which her presence gave me from pain was gone, and the wretchedness of my situation was redoubled by my anxiety after her fate and my apprehensions lest her sufferings should be greater than mine, when I could not be with her to alleviate them. Yes, thou dear partner of all my childish sports! thou sharer of my joys and sorrow! happy should I have ever esteemed myself to encounter every misery for you, and to procure your freedom by the sacrifice of my own. . . .

I did not long remain after my sister [departed]. I was again sold and carried through a number of places till, after traveling a considerable time, I came to a town called Tinmah in the most beautiful country I had yet seen in Africa. . . . I was sold here . . . by a merchant who lived and brought me there. I had been about two or three days at his house when a wealthy widow, a neighbor of his, came there one evening, and brought with her an only son, a young gentleman about my own age and size. Here they saw me; and, having taken a fancy to me, I was bought of the merchant, and went home with them. . . . The next day I was washed and perfumed, and when meal-time came I was led into the presence of my mistress, and ate and drank before her with her son. This filled me with astonishment; and I could scarce help expressing my surprise that the young gentleman should suffer me, who was bound, to eat with him who was free; and not only so, but that he would not at any time either eat or drink till I had taken first, because I was the eldest, which was agreeable to our custom. Indeed everything here, and all their treatment of me, made me forget that I was a slave. . . . There were likewise slaves daily to attend us, while my young master and I with other boys sported with our darts and bows and arrows, as I had been used to do at home. In this resemblance to my former happy state I passed about two months; and I now began to think I was to be adopted into the family, and was beginning to be reconciled to my situation, and to forget by degrees my misfortunes, when all at

once the delusion vanished; for without the least previous knowledge, one morning early, while my dear master and companion was still asleep, I was wakened out of my reverie to fresh sorrow, and hurried away. . . .

At last I came to the banks of a large river, which was covered with canoes in which the people appeared to live with their household utensils and provisions of all kinds. I was beyond measure astonished at this, as I had never before seen any water larger than a pond or a rivulet: and my surprise was mingled with no small fear when I was put into one of these canoes and we began to paddle and move along the river. We continued going on thus till night, and when we came to land and made fires on the banks, each family by themselves, some dragged their canoes on shore, others stayed and cooked in theirs and laid in them all night. . . . Thus I continued to travel, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, through different countries and various nations, till at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped I arrived at the sea coast.

THE SLAVE SHIP

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship which was then riding at anchor and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound by some of the crew, and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions too differing so much from ours, their long hair and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had ever heard) united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in

my own country. When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who had brought me on board and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. . . .

I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables, and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands and laid me across I think the windlass, and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before, and although, not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet nevertheless could I have got over the nettings I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water: and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of these what was to be done with us; they gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate: but still I feared I should be put to death, the white people

looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among my people such instances of brutal cruelty, and this not only shown towards us blacks but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more, and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner. . . .

At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the last of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck, and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. . . .

One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who

were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who on account of his illness was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery. In this manner we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate, hardships which are inseparable from this accursed trade. Many a time we were near suffocation from the want of fresh air, which we were often without for whole days together. This and the stench of the necessary tubs carried off many. . . .

At last we came in sight of the island of Barbados, at which the whites on board gave a great shout and made many signs of joy to us. We did not know what to think of this, but as the vessel drew nearer we plainly saw the harbor and other ships of different kinds and sizes, and we soon

anchored amongst them off Bridgetown. Many merchants and planters now came on board, though it was in the evening. They put us in separate parcels and examined us attentively. They also made us jump, and pointed to the land, signifying we were to go there. . . .

We were not many days in the merchant's custody before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: On a signal given, (as the beat of a drum) the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamor with which this is attended and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment there were several brothers who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you?

The Economics of the Slave Trade



49 ▼ *James Barbot,*

A VOYAGE TO THE NEW CALABAR RIVER

For millions of Africans like Olaudah Equiano, the transatlantic slave trade was a nightmare. For many others it was a source of economic gain. One thinks immediately of wealth generated for European and American merchants, ship captains, plantation owners, and investors who profited from the slave trade and the exploitation of slave labor. As the following selection shows, however, there were also many others, not only in Europe but also in Africa and even Asia, who benefited economically.

James, or Jacques, Barbot, was a merchant from La Rochelle, France, who with his brother Jean moved to London in the late seventeenth century to escape religious persecution after Louis XIV revoked toleration for French Protestants in 1685. Both before and after leaving France the two brothers made several trading voyages to Africa, where they purchased slaves, and then to the Americas, where they sold their human cargo. In this selection Barbot describes his experiences on a voyage in 1699 to the Guinea Coast, a region of intense European commercial activity on Africa's west central coast. He and his ship, the *Albion*, visited a number of coastal towns, including Axim, Fida, Mina, Anamabou, New Calabar, Anischan, and Dony. Their main business took place in Bonny, a small island city-state on the Niger delta with a population of approximately 3,000. After negotiating with the king of Bonny, dubbed by Barbot as "King William," they set sail from Africa with over 600 slaves. This particular venture was a failure. After encountering bad weather en route, Barbot had fewer than 300 sick and emaciated slaves to sell when his ship reached the West Indies.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What individuals and groups directly or indirectly profited from the slave trade? Do not limit yourself to Europeans.
2. What can you infer from Barbot's account about the effect of the slave trade on interior Africa?
3. How would you characterize trade on the Guinea Coast? Was it haphazard bargaining? A well-developed system with a specific currency? Something else?
4. What do the prices of the other commodities purchased by the Europeans say about the relative value of one slave?
5. What does the source reveal about the views of Europeans and slavery on the part of the Africans Barbot encountered?
6. What differences do you see between African attitudes toward the slave trade revealed in Barbot's account and those of King Afonso of Kongo some two hundred years earlier (Chapter 5, source 13)? How do you account for those differences?

April 8. Anchored before the Prussian fort, Great Fredericksburg.¹

The Prussian general received us at his fort very civilly, but told us he had no need for any of our goods; the trade being everywhere on that coast at a standstill, as well by reason of the vast

number of interlopers² and other trading ships; as for the wars among the natives . . . the armies had actually been in the field for eight months, which stopped all the routes for merchants to come down to the forts to trade; that it was expected there would be a battle soon between

¹A fort built at Axim in 1684 by the Africa Company, a trading company founded in 1682 in which the rulers of Brandenburg-Prussia and several smaller German states were the principal investors. The company failed, and its

assets were sold to the Dutch West India Company in the early 1700s.

²Traders who encroached on the trading rights of others.

them; that the Hollanders, a people very jealous of their commerce at the coast, were very committed to have the war carried on among the blacks, to distract as long as possible the trade of other Europeans, and to that effect were always ready to assist upon all occasions the blacks, their allies, that they might beat their enemies, so the commerce would fall into their hands.

On the tenth of April, a small Portuguese ship anchored by us; the master a black said he had been but three weeks from São Tomé,³ and that about three months before he saw there four tall French ships coming from the coast of Guinea, loaded with slaves, mostly at Fida: . . . Those ships had been obliged to give near fifty crowns⁴ apiece, at Fida; slaves being then pretty thin at that place, and in great demand.

The Portuguese master begged our protection to convoy him safely to Cape Corso, on his way to Fida, fearing the Hollanders at Mina, who, whenever they can, force all Portuguese ships to pay them a very high toll for the permission of trading at the coast.

We have abundance of our men sick, and several already dead, the weather being intolerably scorching hot, and we can hardly get any provisions for them, but a few goats very dear: we had from the Portuguese, one goat, one hog, and seven chickens, for five akies⁵ in gold.

Here we perceived that above a hundred pounds worth of horse-beans we had bought at London, for subsisting our slaves in the voyage were quite rotten and spoiled, for want of being well stowed and looked after ever since.

On the twenty-first of April, we set sail, and anchored at Anamabou; where we purchased with much trouble, and at a very dear rate, a quantity of Indian wheat; . . . we paid three akies for every chest of corn, which is excessively expensive;

but having lost all our large stock of horse-beans, were forced to get corn at all rates.

The tenth of May, we sent the boat to Anischan for fuel; and bought a loading of wood chunks at three akies for each hundred, very expensive wood. . . .

The twenty-sixth, as we worked our small anchor aboard, both cable and buoy-rope breaking, we were forced to sail, leaving the anchor behind, which was hitched among the rocks at the bottom; and having purchased sixty-five slaves along the Gold Coast,⁶ besides gold and elephants' teeth,⁷ saluted the three European forts, each with nine guns; and steered east south-east, for four or five leagues, then south-east by east for twenty-eight leagues, towards New Calabar, to buy more slaves. . . .

June 23. Our man reported that the ship we could see within the river was English, commanded by one Edwards, who had got his complement of slaves, being five hundred, in three weeks time; and was ready to sail for the West-Indies: and that he would spare us an anchor of about eleven hundred weight, which rejoiced us much.

He reported further, that as soon as the blacks could see our ship off at sea, they immediately went up the river to buy slaves, besides a hundred and fifty that were actually at Bonny when he left it; and that king William had assured him, he engaged to furnish five hundred slaves for our loading, all lusty and young. Upon which, we consulted aboard with the officers, and unanimously agreed to carry up the ship, if possible, for the greater expedition.

On the twenty-fifth of June in the morning . . . we went ashore also to compliment the king, and make him overtures of trade, but he gave us to understand he expected one bar of iron⁸ for

³A small island off the Guinea Coast controlled by Portugal.

⁴A former English coin worth five shillings.

⁵*Akie* or *accy* was a unit of money used in some parts of the African coast; apparently derived from the English word "account."

⁶Europeans referred to various parts of the Guinea Coast as the Gold Coast, Ivory Coast, Grain Coast, and Slave Coast.

⁷Elephant tusks.

⁸A bar of iron meant just that, but was also the basis for computing the value of other goods and types of currency.

each slave, more than Edwards had paid for his; and also objected much against our basins, tankards, yellow beads, and some other merchandise, as of little or no demand there at that time. The twenty-sixth, we had a conference with the king and principal natives of the country about trade, which lasted from three o'clock till night, without any result, they insisting to have thirteen bars of iron for a male, and ten for a female slave; objecting that they were now scarce, because of the many ships that had exported vast quantities of late. The king treated us at supper, and we took leave of him. . . .

The thirtieth, being ashore, had a new conference, which produced nothing; and then Pepprell, the king's brother, made a speech as from the king, reporting, "He was sorry we would not accept his proposals; that it was not his fault, he having a great esteem and regard for the Whites, who had much enriched him by trade. That what he so earnestly insisted on thirteen bars for a male, and ten for female slaves, came from the country people holding up the price of slaves at their inland markets, seeing so many large ships resort to Bonny for them; but to moderate matters, and encourage trading with us, he would be contented with thirteen bars for males, and nine bars and two brass rings for females, etc." Upon which we offered thirteen bars for men, and nine for women, and proportionably for boys and girls, according to their ages; after this we parted, without concluding anything further.

On the first of July, the king sent for us to come ashore; we stayed there till four in the afternoon, and concluded the trade on the terms offered them the day before; the king promising to come the next day aboard to confirm it, and be paid his duties. . . .

July 2. At two o'clock we fetched the king from shore, attended by all his caboceiros⁹ and

officers, in three large canoes; and entering the ship, was saluted with seven guns. . . .

We had again a long discourse with the king and Pepprell his brother, concerning the rates of our goods and his customs. This Pepprell being a sharp blade, and a mighty talking black, perpetually making sly objections against something or other, and teasing us for this or that, . . . as well as for drinks, etc. it were to be wished, that such a one as he were out of the way, to facilitate trade.

We filled them with drams of brandy and bowls of punch till night, at such a rate that they all, being about fourteen with the king, had such loud clamorous discourses among themselves, as were hardly to be endured.

Thus, with much patience, all our affairs were adjusted after the fashion of a people who are not very scrupulous when it comes to finding excuses for not keeping literally to a verbal contract; for they have not the art of reading and writing, and therefore we are forced to stand to their agreement, which often is no longer than they think fit to hold it themselves. The king ordered the public crier to proclaim permission to trade with us; with the noise of his trumpets, being elephants' teeth made much after the same fashion as is used at the Gold Coast, we paying sixteen brass rings to the fellow for his fee. The blacks objected much against our wrought pewter, and tankards, green beads, and other goods, which they would not accept.

We gave the usual presents to the king and his officers; that is,

To the king a hat, a firelock, and nine bunches of beads, instead of a coat.

To captain Forty, the king's general, captain Pepprell, captain Boileau, alderman Bougsby, my lord Willyby, duke of Monmouth, drunken Henry,¹⁰ and some others, two firelocks, eight hats, nine narrow Guinea stuffs.¹¹

⁹A Portuguese term in this context meaning "middlemen" or "associates."

¹⁰Whimsical nicknames made up by Barbot for the members of the king's entourage.

¹¹Inexpensive wool cloths.

We adjusted with them the reduction of our merchandise into bars of iron, as the standard coin.

One bunch of beads, one bar. Four strings of rings, ten rings in each, one bar. Four copper bars, one bar. One piece of narrow Guinea stuff, one bar. One broad piece of felt, one bar. One piece Nicanees,¹² three bars. . . . And so on, for every other sort of goods.

The price of provisions and wood was also regulated.

Sixty king's yams, one bar; one hundred and sixty slaves' yams,¹³ one bar; for fifty thousand yams to be delivered to us. A large cask of water, two rings. For the length of wood, seven bars, which is expensive; but they were to deliver it ready cut into our boat. For a goat, one bar. A cow, ten or eight bars, according to its bigness. A hog, two bars. A calf, eight bars. A jar of palm-oil one bar and a quarter.

We paid also the king's duties in goods; five hundred slaves, to be purchased at two copper rings a head.

The fifth of August, the king sent aboard thirty slaves, men and women; of which we picked nineteen, and returned the rest.

The sixth, the king came aboard with four slaves, which, with the nineteen others of the day before, made twenty-three, for which we paid him two hundred and forty seven bars, three of the women having each a child. . . .

Thus from day to day, from this time to the twenty-ninth of August following, either by means of our armed sloop making several voyages to New Calabar town, and to Dony, to purchase slaves and provisions; or by the contract made with the king and his people of Bonny, and nearby trading places; we had by degrees aboard six hundred and forty-eight slaves, of all sexes and ages, including the sixty-five we purchased at the Gold Coast, all very fresh and sound, very few exceeding forty years of age; besides provisions of yams, goats, hogs, fowls, wood and water, and some cows and calves. As for fish, this river did not afford us any great quantity, which was a great loss to us, being forced to supply the ship's crew with fresh meat from land, at a great expense, it being here pretty expensive, and most of our salt meat being spent, and have but for three months more of sea biscuit left in the bread-room. Several of our sailors are tormented with colic, and some few dead.

¹²A type of Indian cotton textile.

¹³The value of the yams depended on size and quality.

Rules for Slaves and Masters



50 ▼ *THE BLACK CODE*

Having experienced capture in Africa, purchase by Europeans on Africa's coast, and the transatlantic crossing, what kind of life did newly enslaved Africans face on reaching the Americas? Some answers to this question can be gleaned by analyzing the various legal codes pertaining to slavery that existed in all the American colonies. These codes were issued by European governments and occasionally refined by colonial officials or legislatures to address local conditions. They covered a wide range of issues, including work conditions, manumission, punishments, slave families, sexual relations between slaves and freemen, standards for the care for slaves, and much else. Although many of their provisions were difficult to enforce and hence often ignored, slave codes provide valuable insights into the values of slave-owning societies, the concerns of slave owners, and the realities of slavery itself.

The French *Code Noir*, or Black Code, issued by King Louis XIV in 1685, technically remained in force until 1848. Its rules and regulations were meant to apply to French holdings in the West Indies, the most important of which were Martinique, Guadeloupe, and from the 1670s onward the western parts of Hispaniola, or Saint Domingue. In these colonies, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, until the mid seventeenth century relatively few European colonists had grown tobacco on modest-sized farms with labor supplied mainly by indentured servants. However, in response to competition from Virginia tobacco and the ever-increasing demand for sweets in Europe, beginning in the 1650s the economy of the West Indies shifted decisively to sugar cane, which was grown and processed on large plantations by an ever-greater number of African slaves. By the mid eighteenth century African slaves comprised 90 percent of the population on islands where sugar was grown.

As West Indian planters became dependent on massive amounts of slave labor, the French government in Versailles turned its attention to producing a suitable legal code for the regulation of slavery. Under the direction of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the French controller general of finance (see Chapter 8, source 39), the government collected testimony and suggestions from lawyers, colonial officials, and planters, and then issued the Black Code in 1685. This was two years after Colbert's death and the same year in which the French withdrew religious toleration for French Protestants by revoking the Edict of Nantes.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What part does religion play in the various regulations in the Black Code? What in the code indicates that religious issues had such a prominent place?
2. On the basis of the various provisions of the code, what conclusions can be drawn about the lives and experiences of slaves in the French colonies?
3. What does the code reveal about fears and worries of the slave masters?
4. What does the code reveal about the legal and economic relationship between slaves and masters?
5. What underlying racial attitudes are revealed in the provisions of the code, especially those pertaining to sexual relations between slaves and freemen?
6. What provisions of the code do you think would be most difficult to enforce? Why?

Louis, by God's grace King of France and Navarre,¹ greetings to all people now and in the future: Whereas we are obligated to care for all the people the Divine Providence has placed under our authority, we have been pleased to have

had reviewed in our presence the memoranda which have been sent us by our officials in the American islands: we have been informed of the need they have for our authority and justice to maintain the discipline of the Catholic Church,

¹The northern part of the province of Navarre, which straddles the western Pyrenees, was united with France in

the late sixteenth century when Henry of Navarre ascended the French throne as King Henry IV (r. 1589–1610).

Apostolic and Roman, and to make rules for them concerning the state and quality of the slaves in those said islands; we desire to be able and to make it known to them that even though they live infinitely far from our normal residence, we are always with them, not only by the wide range of our power, but also by the promptness of our attention to care for them in their needs.

For these reasons, on the advice of our Council, with our certain knowledge, full power, and royal authority, we have proclaimed, legislated, and ordered what follows. . . .

2. All slaves in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Catholic religion, Apostolic and Roman. We instruct the colonists buying newly arrived slaves that they should inform the Governor and intendant² of it within one week at the latest, on pain of a summary fine, and they shall give the necessary orders to have them instructed and baptized in due course. . . .

4. No overseer shall be put in charge of Negroes who does not profess the Catholic religion, on pain of the confiscation of the said Negroes from the masters who have appointed them and the summary punishment of the overseers who shall have accepted such an appointment.

6. We order all our subjects, whatever their status, to observe Sundays and Holy Days which are kept by our subjects of the Catholic faith, Apostolic and Roman. We forbid them to work, and we order them not to make their slaves work on these days from midnight to midnight on field work, the production of sugar, and any and all other types of work, on pain of a fine and punishment of the masters, and the confiscation by our officials of however much sugar was produced by those slaves. . . .

9. Freemen who shall have had one or more children by cohabitation with slaves, also masters who shall have allowed it, shall each be sub-

ject to a fine of 200 pounds of sugar, and should they be the masters of the slaves by whom they have had the said children, in addition they shall be deprived of the slave and the children and she and they shall be transferred to the hospital, without the possibility of emancipation. . . .

11. Priests are strictly forbidden to conduct slave marriages if they do not appear to be with the consent of their masters. Masters are also forbidden to use any sanction on their slaves to make them marry against their wish.

12. Children born of slave marriages shall be slaves and shall belong to the masters of the female slaves and not those of her husband if the husband and wife have different masters.

13. We wish that if a slave husband has married a free woman, the children, whether male or female, shall be the status of their mother and shall be free like her . . . ; and also if the father is free and the mother a slave, the infants likewise shall be slaves.

14. Slave masters should have baptized slaves buried in hallowed ground in a cemetery set apart for that specific purpose; those who die unbaptized should be interred at night in whatever field can be found near to the place where they have died.

15. Slaves are forbidden to carry any arms or large clubs on pain of whipping and confiscation of the arms by those who have caught them; the only exception are those who have been sent by their master to go hunting and who carry with them a signed letter of permission from their master.

16. Slaves belonging to different masters are also forbidden to gather together by day or by night under the pretext of marriages or other occasions, either on their masters' estates or otherwise, and even less in the open road or distant spots, on pain of corporal punishment which cannot be less than whipping and branding, and in repeated cases or other aggra-

²An *intendant* was a royal official with responsibilities for tax collection, enforcement of laws, and communicating with the royal administration.

vating circumstances can be punished by death. . . .

17. Masters who are convicted of having permitted or tolerated such gatherings of slaves will be sentenced to make reparations to their neighbors for any damage as a result of these said gatherings and to pay a fine of ten *écus*³ for the first offense and twice that much in case of a repeat offense.

22. Masters shall be obliged to provide each week to their slaves of eighteen years or older for food 2 1/2 measures of cassava⁴ flour, or three cassavas weighing 2 1/2 pounds each at least, or some equivalent provisions, with 2 pounds of salt beef or three pounds of fish, or something of equal value; and to children weaning until ten years old half the above sustenance.

23. It is prohibited to give slaves brandy or fermented cane juice to take the place of rations mentioned in the previous article.

24. It is prohibited to decrease the provisions for slaves by permitting them instead to work on their own account on certain days of the week.

25. It is required that each master supply to each and every slave two cloth outfits or four ells⁵ of cloth, according to the preference of the said master.

26. Slaves who are not fed, clothed, and maintained by their masters, as we have here ordained, may report the fact to our Procurator General⁶ and put their complaints in his hands, in each case, or if the information comes from others, the masters shall be summoned at their request but without cost; which will be the same process as we would wish pursued for crimes and barbarous and inhumane treatment by masters against their slaves.

27. Slaves made infirm by old age, sickness or other causes, whether the disease is curable or not, must be nourished and taken care of by their masters; and in the instance where a slave has been abandoned, the slave shall be sent to a hos-

pital to which the master will be obligated to pay six *sols*⁷ a day for the slave's upkeep and nourishment.

28. We declare that slaves may own nothing which does not belong to their masters; and everything which they receive for their work, or through the gift of other people, or otherwise, whatever their claims might be, shall be regarded fully the property of their masters, even the children of slaves. . . .

33. Any slave who has struck his master, his mistress or their children to cause bruising or bleeding, or on the face, shall be punished by death.

34. Violence or assaults committed by slaves against any free person, shall be severely punished even with death. . . .

36. Slaves stealing sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, sugar cane, millet, manioc⁸ or other vegetables grown by slaves, should be punished according to the type of goods stolen; at their discretion, judges may order the slaves to be beaten with a rod or branded.

37. Masters will be obligated in case of robbery or other damage caused by their slaves to make reparations for the damage on their behalf, or if they prefer, to give away the slave to the party that is owed damages. . . .

38. Runaway slaves who have been missing for a month from the day their master has reported it to the Justice, shall have their ears cut and shall be branded on the shoulder; if they run away for another month, also from the day of the report, they shall have their tongue slit, and be branded on the other shoulder, and the third time, they shall be put to death.

42. Masters are only permitted to have their slaves bound in chains and beaten with rods or whips when they believe their slaves merit it; we prohibit the use of torture and mutilation on the pain of confiscation of the slave and further judicial proceedings against these masters.

³An *écu*, or crown, was a silver coin worth three *livres*.

⁴Any of several plants grown in the tropics for their starchy roots.

⁵A unit of measurement, slightly more than a meter.

⁶A judicial official appointed by the crown.

⁷A silver coin worth one-sixtieth of an *écu*.

⁸Another word for cassava.

43. We instruct our officials to take criminal proceedings against masters or overseers who killed a slave belonging to them or under their command, and shall punish the murderer according to the brutality of the circumstances. . . .

47. It is not permitted to seize⁹ or sell separately a husband and wife and their children when they are all under the authority of the same mas-

ter; we declare null and void all previous sales that have led to separation. . . .

59. We grant to those who have been emancipated the same rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by people born free; wishing that the benefits of acquired liberty may produce in them, as much for their persons as for their goods, the same effects that the good fortune of natural liberty offers to our other subjects.

⁹Seize for payment of a debt or some other financial obligation.

Political Change in the Islamic World

Empires are forged through military conquest, and most disintegrate in the wake of military defeat. So it was for the Muslim empires of Southwest Asia, Africa, and India from the late sixteenth century onward. The Songhai Empire of Africa, which had dominated the western Sudan since the late fifteenth century, fell apart and was replaced by a number of small regional states after a musket-bearing Moroccan army defeated its forces at the Battle of Tondibi outside of Gao in 1591. The Safavid Empire came to an abrupt end in 1722 when Afghan warriors took the capital city of Isfahan, and the Safavids fled to the hills, leaving the empire open to Ottoman invasion, decades of anarchy, and ultimately the establishment of the weak Qajar Dynasty in the 1790s. The Mughal Empire in India broke apart when the warlord Nadir Shah, having seized power from the Afghans after the fall of the Safavids, in 1739 invaded India and sacked Delhi, the Mughal capital. The Ottoman Empire outlasted the other Islamic empires, but in the end it too disappeared after military defeat, in this case in World War I.

In each one of these empires decay had set in long before the military defeats that led to their final demise. Like countless previous empires, all of them faced deteriorating financial situations once their expansion ended. Large armies were still needed to defend borders and maintain authority over newly conquered racial, ethnic, and religious groups, many of whom resented their new rulers and resisted integration into the new state. Rulers themselves added to the financial strain by spending large sums on court life, the arts, and ambitious building programs. During the time of imperial expansion such costs were met by confiscating the wealth of newly conquered peoples and adding them to the tax roles. After expansion ended, expenses could be met only by raising taxes, running deficits, and selling offices and titles. Such expedients impeded economic growth, encouraged government corruption and inefficiency, and simply put off the day of final fiscal reckoning.

All of these empires were plagued by succession struggles and deteriorating leadership. In the Ottoman and Safavid empires the practice of raising the rulers'

sons as indulged prisoners in the palace to prevent rebellions resulted in a long series of uninformed, inexperienced, and often debauched sultans and shahs. In the Ottoman Empire decisive rulers and fierce warriors such as Selim the Grim (r. 1512–1520) and Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) gave way to incompetents such as Selim the Sot (r. 1566–1574) and Ibrahim the Crazy (r. 1640–1648). In Persia, the distinguished reign of Shah Abbas I (1587–1629) was followed by the murderous rule of Shah Safi, Abbas's grandson, who took power after Abbas had ordered the murder of one of his sons and the blinding of two others. In Songhai, of the eight sixteenth-century rulers who followed the empire's founders, Sunni Ali (r. 1469–1492) and Askia Muhammad (r. 1493–1528), all but three were murdered in office or deposed. Not a one dealt effectively with succession-related conflicts, internal rivalries, or outside threats. Leadership also was a problem in Mughal India. Aurangzeb's (r. 1658–1707) persecution of his Hindu subjects and his costly military campaigns in the south set the stage for the religious conflicts and rebellions that undermined Mughal authority in the eighteenth century.

Although the causes of political decline in these empires were broadly similar, the consequences were quite different. After the breakup of the Songhai Empire, the western Sudan was ruled by a number of small regional states, some of which were conquered and merged around 1800 into a larger state, the Sokoto Caliphate, by the religious and political reformer Usman dan Fodio. Persia survived the civil wars of the immediate post-Safavid Era, but then languished for another century and a half under the Zand and Qajar dynasties. The Ottoman Empire continued, but the efforts of reforming sultans and ministers failed to halt territorial losses or prevent growing Western interference in its political and economic affairs. The fall of the Mughal Empire had the most significant result. It paved the way for the British takeover of the Indian subcontinent, the beginning of a new wave of European imperialism that by the late nineteenth century brought Africa and much of Asia under Western control.

Ottoman Decline: An Insider's View



51 ▼ *Mehmed Pasha,* *THE BOOK OF COUNSEL* *FOR VIZIERS AND GOVERNORS*

Along with battlefield defeats, fiscal crises, internal turmoil, and palace intrigues, another sign of Ottoman decline in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the appearance of treatises with plans for reviving the empire's fortunes. Among the most candid and insightful works of this type was *The Book of Counsel for Viziers and Governors*, written in the early eighteenth century by an Ottoman treasury official, Mehmed Pasha. Although little is known about Mehmed Pasha's early life, it is likely that he was born into the family of a petty merchant in Istanbul in the 1650s. While in his teens, he became an apprentice for an

official in the Ottoman treasury department, a branch of the government in which he worked for the rest of his career. His long service was rewarded in 1702, when he was named chief *defterdar*, or treasurer of the empire. Over the next fifteen years Mehmed Pasha lost and regained the office no less than seven times as one faction or another became ascendant in the sultan's administration. In 1717 he was executed on order of the sultan when his enemies blamed him for the loss of a fortress in the Balkans.

It is unknown when exactly Mehmed Pasha wrote *The Book of Counsel for Viziers and Governors*, but internal evidence suggests it was around 1703 or 1704. It is a book written by a man who had firsthand knowledge of the failings of the Ottoman state and was deeply disturbed by what he knew.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Mehmed Pasha cites several examples of how the sultan's subjects suffer as a result of government policies and practices. What examples does he cite and what are their causes?
2. What, according to the author, are the reasons for the government's financial problems? What solutions does he propose?
3. How does Mehmed Pasha's description of the Ottoman military and government differ from the observations made by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq in the sixteenth century (Chapter 6, source 21)?
4. What do Mehmed Pasha's comments reveal about the economic situation in the Ottoman Empire around 1700?
5. Little was done to implement the changes suggested by Mehmed Pasha and other Ottoman reformers. What do you think made it so difficult to achieve meaningful reforms?

THE RESULTS OF BRIBERY

It is essential to guard against giving office through bribery to the unfit and to tyrannical oppressors. For giving office to such as these because of bribes means giving permission to plunder the property of the subjects. An equivalent for the bribe which is given must be had. In addition to what is given as a bribe, he must make a profit for himself and his followers. Bribery is the beginning and root of all illegality and tyranny, the source and fountain of every sort of disturbance and sedition, the greatest of

calamities. . . . There is no more powerful engine of injustice and cruelty, for bribery destroys both faith and state. . . .

If it becomes necessary to give a position because of bribes, in this way its holder has permission from the government for every sort of oppression. Stretching out the hand of violence and tyranny against the poor subjects along his route of travel¹ and spreading fear among the poor, he destroys the wretched peasants and ruins the cultivated lands. As the fields and villages become empty of husbandmen, day by day weakness comes to land and property, which remain

¹Officials traveling on government business were entitled to horses, food, and lodging from the people of the districts they visited.

destitute of profits, revenues, harvest, and benefit. In addition to the fact that it causes a decline in the productivity of the subjects and in the revenues of the Treasury, through neglect of the employment of tilling and lack of the work of agriculture, there is the greatest probability . . . that will cause scarcity, dearth, mishaps and calamities.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The business of the Treasury is among the most important and essential affairs of the Exalted Government. The man who is chief treasurer needs to know and understand . . . the Treasury employees who for their own advantage are the cause of ruin and destruction to the government service in obtaining tax farms.² He must know how they behave in getting money from the Treasury through "invalid receipts"³ and in other cases, and he must understand what are their tricks and wiles. . . . Every one of them is waiting and watching in the corner of opportunity, taking care . . . to cause certain matters outside the regular procedure to appear correct. . . . In case the chief treasurer is not informed about such persons, they cause the wasting of the public wealth through various frauds, and of disordering affairs. . . .

Reliance must not be placed in the calumnies and lies of certain spitefully jealous persons regarding the chief treasurers. For most people, and especially some of the government officers, are always making proposals detrimental to the condition of the Treasury and to the property of the repository of money. . . . They want a man who gives out the public money freely. They say, "This treasurer is unjust," and set themselves to

putting forward all sorts of improprieties of his. But let him not be quickly removed, without making very careful investigation and enquiry and search by dependable persons about his habits, and without having complete knowledge in this matter. . . . In short it is absolutely essential that freedom be given to those who are chief treasurers.

Those who are chief treasurers should be extremely circumspect in behavior, upright and devout, devoid of avarice and spite. . . . They . . . should strive to increase the income of the Treasury and to diminish expenditures.

But the reduction of expenditures cannot come about through the care and industry of the chief treasurer alone. These must be supplemented by the Sovereign and personal help of his imperial majesty the sultan, who is the refuge of the universe, and by the good management of his excellency the grand vizier.⁴ . . .

Certain tax concessions, instead of being farmed out, should be committed to the charge of trustworthy and upright persons on government account.⁵

Let the janissary corps⁶ not be increased. Let them be well disciplined, few but elite, and all present in time of need. In this connection also it is fitting to be extremely careful and to be attentive in keeping their rolls in proper order and in having the soldiers actually present. The late Lutfi Pasha, who was formerly grand vizier, has written: "Fifteen thousand soldiers are a great many soldiers. It is a heroic deed to pay the wages year by year of fifteen thousand men with no decrease." But under the present conditions the soldiers and pensioned veterans . . . who get pay and rations have exceeded all limits.

In order that the income and expenditure of the Treasury may be known and the totals in-

²Tax farms were purchased by private individuals who in return for paying the government a lump sum had the right to collect taxes owed the government.

³Forged documents showing that a person had paid taxes he owed.

⁴A vizier was a government minister. The *grand vizier* was chief minister.

⁵In other words, tax farming should be abandoned and taxes

collected directly by government officials. The author does not develop this point further.

⁶Infantry fighters in the Ottoman army, originally recruited from the sultan's Christian subjects who were converted to Islam and given over to military training. Their effectiveness and discipline had severely declined by the eighteenth century.

spected, the rolls of the bureaus must be investigated and the numbers known. There are on a war footing 53,200 janissary footmen, consisting of janissaries of the imperial court and pensioned veterans, including those who are in the fortresses protecting the ever-victorious frontier. There are 17,133 cavalrymen of the sipahis, silihdars,⁷ and four other regiments of cavalry. The armorers of the imperial court and artillerymen and artillery drivers and bostanjis⁸ of the bodyguard . . . and the aghas⁹ of the imperial stirrup and müteferriqas¹⁰ and sergeants and gatemen and those who belong to the imperial stables and the flourishing kitchens and to the dockyard and to the *peikan*¹¹ and to other units, making up 17,716 persons, the total of all these amounts to 96,727 persons.

The expense for meat and value of the winter allowance¹² together with the yearly pay of the janissaries of the lofty court and armorers and artillerymen and artillery drivers in the fortresses on the ever-victorious frontier exceeds a total of ten thousand purses of aspers.¹³ And in addition to these, the local troops in the fortresses on the ever-victorious frontier number seventy thousand persons and certain veterans pensioned from the income of the custom house and tax farms, together with those who have the duty of saying prayers amount to twenty-three thousand five hundred. Their yearly pay amounts to five thousand nine hundred and ten purses. Those who are on the government galleys total six thousand persons and their yearly pay eight hundred purses. Accordingly, the total of those who receive pay and have duties is 196,227 and their yearly pay amounts to 16,710 purses.¹⁴

In addition to these salaries there are incomes of the illustrious princes and princesses and the

grand vizier and the yearly allowance of the Tatar princes¹⁵ and of the commanders of the sea and the expenditures of the imperial kitchens and stables, of the flourishing dockyards, of the prefect of the capital, of the chief butcher, of the agha of Istanbul, of the chief biscuit maker, of the cannon factory, some expenditures of müteferriqas, and in addition to these, chance expenditures which do not come to mind. . . . For this reason the income does not cover the expenditure, and of necessity the farmed taxes, and other taxes such as the capitation tax,¹⁶ have each fallen a year or two in arrears.

THE STATE OF THE MILITARY

The troops on the frontiers are actually too numerous on their rolls and in the summaries given, although it is certain that in their appointed places each battalion is deficient, some being perhaps half lacking and others even more, nevertheless they let the salaries be sent from here for all. As for the extra money which they get, they have agreed to divide it among themselves. Care and thought and trustworthiness and uprightness in the officers is needed for the separation and distinguishing of those who are present and those who are absent. . . .

Everyone knows that there are very many people outside the corps who pretend they are janissaries. Especially in recent times, because of the long continuance of campaigns which have taken place against the Magyars¹⁷ and in various other regions according to the necessity of the moment, outsiders have joined and mixed themselves among this janissary corps more than among all the others. Becoming mingled with all sorts of people, the janissaries have broken

⁷*Sipahis* and *silihdars* were cavalry troops supported by land grants from the sultan.

⁸Infantry troops who maintained the palace grounds in Istanbul.

⁹Generals.

¹⁰Mounted bodyguards who accompanied diplomats on missions.

¹¹An elite bodyguard numbering thirty to forty men who wore distinctive gilded helmets.

¹²Payments over and above the troops' regular salary.

¹³A *purse* was a unit of money made up of approximately 420 *piasters*; one *piaster* equaled 120 *aspers*.

¹⁴A sum that exceeded the estimated annual income of the government.

¹⁵Chieftains on the border of the empire who were allies of the Ottomans.

¹⁶A tax on individuals; a head tax.

¹⁷The term *Magyar*, meaning Hungarian, was used to refer to any of the Ottomans' Christian enemies in southeastern Europe.

down their fixed regulations. In the towns and villages situated on the coasts of Anatolia and in many regions of Rumelia¹⁸ likewise, many of the subject population, in order to free their necks from the obligations which are incumbent upon them, have changed their dress.¹⁹ Because of their pretensions of being janissaries and because of aid from the commanders of the latter,²⁰ the civilians cannot be separated from the janissaries. There is no distinction between this sort of men and the faithful guardians of the frontier, veterans who have undergone fatigue and hard usage on campaigns, who have perhaps been several times wounded and injured, who have suffered cuts and bruises for the welfare of faith and state, who have pillowed their heads on stones and lain down to sleep upon the ground. . . .

At the present time special care is necessary in the repairing of castles. If they be built solidly they will not become dilapidated, and frequent repairs will not be needed. But the execution of repairs must not be committed to any chance person, for the appropriation from the Treasury may be embezzled and wasted. It must be committed to a man who abstains from profiteering and avarice.

When either the glorious commander-in-chief or the generals go on campaign their true purpose should be the animating of religion and the execution of the words of the Prophet. . . . Let them not be unjust or oppressive to any one, but just and equitable, and let them seek to win affection and praises. While not oppressing or tyrannizing over the military corps, let them safeguard proper discipline.

For when soldiers are charged with a campaign, they join in bands and agree together to consider one of themselves as chief. Practicing brigandage, they are not satisfied with free fodder for their horses and food for their own bellies

from the villages they meet. They covet the horse-cloth and rags of the peasants, and if they can get their hands on the granaries they become joyful, filling their sacks with barley and oats for provisions and fodder. While they behave in this way, . . . the sighs and groans of mankind attain the heavens and it is certain that they will be accursed. . . .

ECONOMIC REGULATIONS

It is essential at all times for every ruler to keep track of the small things relating to the general condition of the people. He must set the proper market prices. Everything must be sold at the price it is worth. For in case the sultan and the viziers say: "The fixing of market prices, though part of the public business, is insignificant," and are not diligent about it, the city judge alone cannot carry it out. . . . Under such circumstances everyone buys and sells as he pleases. Through senseless avarice the venom of vipers is added to lawful goods. The most contemptible of the people, useless both for the services of the sultan and for warfare, become possessors of all the wealth . . . while the great men of the people who deserve respect, becoming poor and powerless, pursue the road of bankruptcy. Then, when it comes about that both horsemen and footmen who go on campaign must sell all their property,²¹ it is troublesome and difficult to determine all at once how to restrain those men who have them by the throat and how to change their demeanor and diminish their arrogance (may God forbid it!). . . . The fruiterers and merchants put a double price on provisions and supplies and reap a harvest of profits. They rob the people. It is apparent that neglect in this matter redounds to the harm of believers in time of trouble and to the benefit of fruiterers and merchants.²²

¹⁸An area north of Greece, including the regions of Albania, Macedonia, and Thrace.

¹⁹The people have purchased and wear the uniforms of the janissaries and claim to be members of the corps to avoid taxes.

²⁰The commanders have accepted bribes to enter their names on the corps' roles.

²¹Many soldiers paid for their own military equipment and provisions before a campaign. They hoped to recoup their expenses through plunder.

²²Many merchants were Christian Armenians or Jews.

Fatal Flaws of the Mughal Empire



52 ▼ *François Bernier, LETTER TO JEAN-BAPTISTE COLBERT ON THE MUGHAL EMPIRE*

In 1658 Aurangzeb, the son of Shah Jahan and grandson of Jahangir, became India's new emperor as a result of a three-year succession struggle that resulted in the execution of two of his brothers, the death in battle of another, and the imprisonment of his father, Shah Jahan, for the last year of his life. Aurangzeb, who ruled until 1707, is often blamed for the rapid demise of the Mughal Empire that followed his death. True, his abandonment of his predecessors' tolerant policy toward Hinduism proved disastrous. His decisions to raise Hindus' taxes and level their temples led to resentment and rebellion, not the conversions to Islam he had anticipated. It is also true that his long military campaigns in the south left an empty treasury and an exhausted and demoralized army. As the following source reveals, however, the Mughal Empire that Aurangzeb inherited was deeply flawed. His policies accelerated the empire's disintegration, but they were not its underlying cause.

The author of the following letter, François Bernier (ca. 1620–1688), was born in the French city of Angers and originally hoped to pursue a career as a Catholic churchman. While a student at the University of Paris, however, he abandoned theology, joined a circle of intellectuals led by the materialist philosopher Pierre Gassendi, and in the late 1640s traveled through much of north central Europe in the service of a French diplomat. He then obtained his medical degree from the University of Montpellier and immediately departed for Asia and Africa, where he visited Syria, Egypt, and finally India in the hope of establishing some sort of career as a physician.

Bernier's travels had surprising results. In 1658 he became the personal physician of no less a figure than the new Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb. He left his post in 1669, returning to France to write books on Asia and edit Gassendi's philosophical works. In 1670 he took time to communicate his thoughts about India in a letter to Colbert, France's controller general of finance. Bernier was an acute political observer. Beneath the wealth and splendor of the Mughal Empire he detected inherent weaknesses that within only a few decades brought about the empire's ruin.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is Bernier's overall assessment of the Mughal government? What are its major weaknesses?
2. What seems to impress Bernier most about India? As a European what does he most deplore in Indian society?
3. In what ways does he see a relationship between India's political situation and its economy?

4. According to Bernier what problems resulted from the fact that Aurangzeb was a Muslim?
5. Compare Bernier's critique of Mughal government and society with the observations of Mehmed Pasha concerning the problems of the Ottoman Empire (source 51). To what extent are the problems of the governments similar and different?

I think I have shown that the precious metals must abound in Hindustan,¹ although the country be destitute of mines; and that the Great Mughal, lord and master of the greater part, must necessarily be in the receipt of an immense revenue, and possess incalculable wealth.

But there are many circumstances to be considered, as forming a counterpoise to these riches.

First. — Of the vast tracts of country constituting the empire of Hindustan, many are little more than sand, or barren mountains, badly cultivated, and thinly peopled; and even a considerable portion of the good land remains untilled from want of laborers; many of whom perish in consequence of the bad treatment they experience from the Governors. These poor people, when incapable of discharging the demands of their rapacious lords, are not only often deprived of the means of subsistence, but are bereft of their children, who are carried away as slaves. Thus it happens that many of the peasantry, driven to despair by so execrable a tyranny, abandon the country, and seek a more tolerable mode of existence, either in the towns, or camps; as bearers of burdens, carriers of water, or servants to horsemen. Sometimes they fly to the territories of a Raja,² because there they find less oppression, and are allowed a greater degree of comfort.

Second. — The empire of the Great Mughal comprehends several nations, over which he is not absolute master. Most of them still retain their own peculiar chiefs or sovereigns, who obey the Mughal or pay him tribute only by compulsion. In many instances this tribute is of trifling amount; in others none is paid. . . .

The petty sovereignties bordering the Persian frontiers, for example, seldom pay tribute either to the Mughal or to the King of Persia. . . . Nor can the former be said to receive anything considerable from the Baluchi, Afghans,³ and other mountaineers, who indeed seem to feel nearly independent of him. . . .

The Pathans⁴ are ungovernable. . . . They hold the Indians, both Hindus and Mughals, in the utmost contempt; and, recollecting the consideration in which they were formerly held in India, they mortally hate the Mughals, by whom their fathers were dispossessed of great principalities, and driven to the mountains far from Dehli and Agra. . . .

The King of Bijapur,⁵ so far from paying tribute to the Mughal, is engaged in perpetual war with him, and contrives to defend his dominions. . . . His Kingdom is at a great distance from Agra and Dehli, the Mughal's usual places of residence; the capital city, called also Bijapur, is strong, and not easily accessible to an invad-

¹*Hindustan* is the Persian word for India. It is usually used in reference to the whole of India north of the Deccan, the region of southern India below the Narmada and Kistna rivers.

²A Hindu prince; in this context one who paid tribute to the Mughal emperor but who maintained his political independence.

³Peoples who lived in provinces loosely linked to the Mughal Empire in regions of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan.

⁴The Pathans were a people originally from the region of modern southeastern Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan. Rulers of the Lodi Dynasty, the last dynasty that held the Delhi sultanate, they were Parthans; they were defeated by the founder of the Mughal Empire, Babur, in 1526.

⁵Bijapur and Golconda (mentioned in the next paragraph) were both Muslim states in south central India.

ing army, because of the bad water and scarcity of forage in the surrounding country; and several Rajas for the sake of mutual security join him, when attacked, with their forces. . . .

There is again the wealthy and powerful King of Golconda, who secretly supplies the King of Bijapur with money, and constantly keeps an army on the frontiers, with the double object of defending his own territories and aiding Bijapur in the event of that country being closely pressed.

Similarly, among those not paying tribute may be numbered more than a hundred Rajas, or Hindu sovereigns of considerable strength, dispersed over the whole empire, some near and some at a distance from Agra and Dehli. Fifteen or sixteen of these Rajas are rich and formidable, and if [they] . . . chose to enter into an offensive league, they would prove dangerous opponents to the Mughal. . . .

Third. — It is material to remark that the Great Mughal is a Muslim, of the sect of the Sunnis, who, believing with the Turks that Osman was the true successor of Muhammad, are distinguished by the name of Osmanlys.⁶ The majority of his courtiers, however, being Persians, are of the party known by the appellation of Shiites,⁷ believers in the real succession of Ali. Moreover, the Great Mughal is a foreigner in Hindustan, a descendant of Tamerlane,⁸ . . . who, about the year 1401, overran and conquered the Indies. Consequently he finds himself in a hostile country, or nearly so; a country containing hundreds of Hindus to one Mughal, or even to one Muslim. To maintain himself in such a country, in the midst of domestic and powerful enemies, and to be always prepared against any hostile movement on the side of Persia or Uzbek, he is under the necessity of keeping up numerous armies, even in the time of peace. . . .

It is also important to remark the absolute necessity which exists of paying the whole of this

army every two months . . . for the King's pay is their only means of sustenance. In France, when the exigencies of the times prevent the government from immediately discharging an arrear of debt, an officer, or even a private soldier, may contrive to live for some time by means of his own private income; but in the Indies, any unusual delay in the payment of the troops is sure to be attended with fatal consequences; after selling whatever trifling articles they may possess, the soldiers disband and die of hunger. Toward the close of the late civil war, I discovered a growing disposition in the troopers to sell their horses, which they would, no doubt, soon have done if the war had been prolonged. And no wonder; for consider, My Lord, that it is difficult to find in the Mughal's army, a soldier who is not married, who has not wife, children, servants, and slaves, all depending upon him for support. I have known many persons lost in amazement while contemplating the number of persons, amounting to millions, who depend for support solely on the King's pay. Is it possible, they have asked, that any revenue can suffice for such incredible expenditure? seeming to forget the riches of the Great Mughal, and the peculiar manner in which Hindustan is governed.

But I have not enumerated all the expenses incurred by the Great Mughal. He keeps in Delhi and Agra from two to three thousand fine horses, always at hand in case of emergency; eight or nine hundred elephants, and a large number of baggage horses, mules, and porters, intended to carry the numerous and capacious tents, with their fittings, his wives and women, furniture, kitchen apparatus, water, and all the other articles necessary for the camp, which the Mughal has always about him, as in his capital, things which are not considered necessary in our kingdoms in Europe.

Add to this, if you will, the enormous expenses of the harem, where the consumption of fine

⁶The Ottomans believed that Osman I (r. 1299–1326) and his descendants were caliphs, successors of Muhammad and heads of the Islamic community.

⁷Shi'ite Muslims believed that the true caliphs were de-

scendants of Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali. See Chapter 6, source 24.

⁸Tamerlane, or Timur the Lame (1336–1405), was a great Turkic conqueror.

cloths of gold, and brocades, silks, embroideries, pearls, musk, amber and sweet essences, is greater than can be conceived.

Thus, although the Great Mughal be in receipt of an immense revenue, his expenditure being much in the same proportion, he cannot possess the vast surplus of wealth that most people seem to imagine. I admit that his income exceeds probably the joint revenues of the Grand Seigneur⁹ and of the King of Persia; but if I were to call him a wealthy monarch, it would be in the sense that a treasurer is to be considered wealthy who pays with one hand the large sums which he receives with the other. . . .

Toward the conclusion of the last war, Aurangzeb was perplexed how to pay and supply his armies, notwithstanding that the war had continued but five years, that the pay of the troops was less than usual, that, with the exception of Bengal . . . , a profound tranquillity reigned in every part of Hindustan, and that he had so lately appropriated to himself a large portion of the treasures of his father Shah Jahan. . . .

Before I conclude, I wish to explain how it happens that, although this Empire of the Mughal is such an abyss for gold and silver;¹⁰ as I said before, these precious metals are not in greater plenty here than elsewhere; on the contrary, the inhabitants have less the appearance of a moneyed people than those of many other parts of the globe.

In the first place, a large quantity is melted, re-melted, and wasted, in fabricating women's bracelets, both for the hands and feet, chains, ear-rings, nose and finger rings, and a still larger quantity is consumed in manufacturing embroideries; alachas, or striped silken stuffs; touras, or fringes of gold lace, worn on turbans; gold and silver cloths, scarfs, turbans, and brocades. The quantity of these articles made in India is incredible.

In the second place, the King, as proprietor of the land, makes over a certain quantity to military men, as an equivalent for their pay; and this grant is called jah-ghir . . . the word jagir signifying the spot from which to draw, or the place of salary. Similar grants are made to governors, in lieu of their salary, and also for the support of their troops, on condition that they pay a certain sum annually to the King out of any surplus revenue that the land may yield. The lands not so granted are retained by the King as the peculiar domains of his house, and are seldom, if ever, given in the way of jagir; and upon these domains he keeps contractors, who are also bound to pay him an annual rent.

The persons thus put in possession of the land, whether as governors or contractors, have an authority almost absolute over the peasantry, and nearly as much over the artisans and merchants of the towns and villages within their district; and nothing can be imagined more cruel and oppressive than the manner in which it is exercised. There is no one before whom the injured peasant, artisan, or tradesman can pour out his just complaints; no great lords, parliaments, or judges of local courts, exist, as in France, to restrain the wickedness of those merciless oppressors, and the judges are not invested with sufficient power to redress the wrongs of these unhappy people. This sad abuse of the royal authority may not be felt in the same degree near capital cities such as Delhi and Agra, or in the vicinity of large towns and seaports, because in those places acts of gross injustice cannot easily be concealed from the court.

This debasing state of slavery obstructs the progress of trade and influences the manners and mode of life of every individual. There can be little encouragement to engage in commercial pursuits, when the success with which they may be attended, instead of adding to the enjoyments

⁹The king of France, in this case Louis XIV.

¹⁰Bernier had already discussed the reasons why as a result of the balance of trade India received and kept large amounts of gold and silver.

of life, provokes the cupidity of a neighboring tyrant possessing both power and inclination to deprive any man of the fruits of his industry. When wealth is acquired, as must sometimes be the case, the possessor, so far from living with increased comfort and assuming an air of independence, studies the means by which he may appear indigent: his dress, lodging, and furniture, continue to be mean, and he is careful, above all things, never to indulge in the pleasures of the table. In the meantime, his gold and silver remain buried at a great depth in the ground. . . .

The misery of this ill-fated country is increased by the practice which prevails too much at all times, but especially on the breaking out of an important war, of selling the different government offices for immense sums in hard cash. Hence it naturally becomes the principal object of the individual thus appointed Governor, to obtain repayment of the purchase-money, which he borrowed as he could at a ruinous rate of interest. Indeed whether the government of a province has or has not been bought, the Governor,

as well as the treasurer and the farmer of the revenue must find the means of making valuable presents, every year, to a vizier, a Eunuch, a lady of the harem, and to any other person whose influence at court he considers indispensable. The Governor must also enforce the payment of the regular tribute to the King; and although he was originally a wretched slave, involved in debt, and without the smallest patrimony, he yet becomes a great and opulent lord.

Thus do ruin and desolation overspread the land. The provincial governors, as before observed, are so many petty tyrants, possessing a boundless authority; and as there is no one to whom the oppressed subject may appeal, he cannot hope for redress, let his injuries be ever so grievous or ever so frequently repeated.

It is true that the Great Mughal sends agents to the various provinces; that is, persons whose business it is to communicate every event that takes place; but there is generally a disgraceful collusion between these officers and the governor, so that their presence seldom restrains the tyranny exercised over the unhappy people.

¹¹A financier who in return for making a lump-sum payment to the government received the right to collect taxes in a given district.

The Continuing Vitality of Islam

The resurgence of Islam in the late twentieth century, characterized by political militancy, intensification of personal devotion, and a drive to create societies based on Islamic law and teaching, has roots deep in Islamic history. Time and again Islam has been revitalized and renewed by movements inspired by visionaries and reformers who have exhorted believers to purify doctrine and ritual and to rededicate their lives to God. Many of these reformers spoke of the need for *Jihad*, Arabic for exertion or struggle. In formal religious terms this meant the struggle of Muslims to overcome unbelief and sin. It could also mean holy war against unbelievers.

The eighteenth century was such a period of Islamic revitalization despite the demoralizing political and military failures of the major Muslim empires. While the Ottomans were losing battles to European armies and the Safavid and Mughal empires were disintegrating, Islam continued to make converts in Southeast Asia

and Africa and spread into areas such as eastern Bengal through migration. In addition, movements of reform and renewal took root in many parts of the Islamic world, including the religion's historic center in Arabia and its outermost fringes in Southeast Asia and West Africa.

Given the dissimilar environments in which these movements took place, it is not surprising that their doctrines and impact varied greatly. Most were led by legal or Qur'anic scholars or by Muslims with ties to *sufism*, the mystical dimension of Islam that emphasizes personal experience and closeness to God through devotion. Many reformers traveled widely and drew inspiration from ideas they encountered in religious centers such as Baghdad, Cairo, Mecca, and Medina. Some called for a purification of Muslim practices and a return to Islam's fundamentals as revealed in the Qur'an and the teachings and deeds of Muhammad. Many were convinced that Islam had been tainted by accommodating itself to local religious customs and beliefs. Some urged Muslims to seek social justice, while others preached a message of puritanical rigor and personal regeneration. A few called on their followers to take up the sword against unbelievers and heretics.

Eighteenth-century Islamic reform movements were not anti-Western in any meaningful sense. They did, however, affect interaction between the West and the Islamic world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To many earlier Islamic intellectuals and religious leaders, certain Western and Islamic views were not necessarily incompatible, and Muslim thinkers had integrated aspects of Western thought, especially ancient Greek science, into Islamic learning. The message of many eighteenth-century reformers, however, was that Islam was sufficient unto itself. It should be more exclusivist, more centered on its own writings and traditions, and more suspicious of outside ideas and practices. Such views were one of many factors that shaped the tone of interactions between the Muslim and Western worlds in the modern era.

A Call to Recapture Islam's Purity



53 ▼ 'Abdullah Wahhab, THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINES OF THE WAHHABIS

Muhammad ibn-Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) was a native of Nejd, a region in the east central part of the Arabian Peninsula, who as a student and teacher visited Mecca, Medina, Basra, Damascus, and Baghdad. In the course of his studies he embraced the ideas of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the ninth-century jurist and founder of the *Hanbali* school of Sunni Muslim law, which asserted that the sole source of Islamic law was the Qur'an and *hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad's sayings and practices as recorded by those who knew him. Returning home, Wahhab began to denounce the Arabs' religious failings. These included magical rituals, faith in holy men, worship of saints and their tombs, and veneration of supposedly sacred

wells and trees. Rejecting Sufi mysticism and rationalist attempts to understand God's nature and purposes, he sought to recapture the pure faith revealed to the Prophet and set forth in Hanbali doctrines. Wahhab urged his listeners to focus on Islam's central doctrine that only God was worthy of worship. Calling themselves *Muwahhidin*, or "unitarians," to emphasize their exclusive devotion to Allah, Wahhab's followers gained military backing when an Arabian chieftain, Muhammad ibn-Sa'ud, accepted their message and dedicated himself to spreading it by force.

In 1803, eleven years after Abd al-Wahhab's death, his followers captured the holy city of Mecca, the immediate aftermath of which is described in the following selection. The excerpt is taken from a pamphlet written by the founder's grandson, 'Abdullah Wahhab, who participated in the conquest of Mecca and was executed when an army sent by the Ottoman sultan took the city in 1818. The pamphlet was written to answer critics and clarify the true beliefs of the Muwahhidin.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In the Wahhabi view what are the most serious threats to the purity of Islam?
2. How did the Wahhabis attempt to change Mecca after they captured it? What do their acts reveal about their beliefs and purposes?
3. The Wahhabis have been characterized as puritanical and intolerant. Is such a view justified on the basis of this document?
4. The Wahhabis strongly opposed Shi'ism and the use of logic as a means of discovering religious truth. Why? (See the introduction to source 24 for a discussion of Shi'ism.)
5. How do the Wahhabis perceive their role in the history of Islam?

In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful! Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe, and blessing and peace be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful, and on his people and his companions, and those who lived after them, and their successors of the next generation! Now I was engaged in the holy war, carried on by those who truly believe in the Unity of God, when God, praised be He, graciously permitted us to enter Mecca, the holy, the exalted, at midday, on the 6th day of the week on the 8th of the month Muharram, 1218, Hijr¹. Before this, Sa'ud, our leader in the holy war, whom the Lord protect,

had summoned the nobles, the divines, and the common people of Mecca; for indeed the leaders of the pilgrims and the rulers of Mecca had resolved on battle, and had risen up against us in the holy place, to exclude us from the house of God. But when the army of the true believers advanced, the Lord filled their hearts with terror, and they fled hither and thither. Then our commander gave protection to everyone within the holy place, while we, with shaven heads and hair cut short,² entered with safety, crying "Labbayka,"³ without fear of any created being, and only of the Lord God. Now, though we were

¹April 1803 on the Islamic calendar.

²A custom during the pilgrimage to Mecca.

³The loud cry uttered by Muslims as they begin their pilgrimage activities in Mecca.

more numerous, better armed and disciplined than the people of Mecca, yet we did not cut down their trees, neither did we hunt,⁴ nor shed any blood except the blood of victims, and of those four-footed beasts which the Lord has made lawful by his commands.

When our pilgrimage was over, we gathered the people together on the forenoon of the first day of the week, and our leader, whom the Lord saves, explained to the divines what we required of the people, . . . namely, a pure belief in the Unity of God Almighty. He pointed out to them that there was no dispute between us and them except on two points, and that one of these was a sincere belief in the unity of God, and a knowledge of the different kinds of prayer of which *du'a*⁵ was one. He added that to show the significance of *shirk*,⁶ the prophet (may he be blessed!) had put people to death on account of it; that he had continued to call upon them to believe in the Unity of God for some time after he became inspired, and that he had abandoned *shirk* before the Lord had declared to him the remaining four pillars⁷ of Islam. The second point related to actions lawful and unlawful as prohibited. . . .

Then they jointly and severally admitted that our belief was best, and promised the Emir to be guided by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. . . . They then acknowledged our belief, and there was not one among them who doubted or hesitated to believe that that for which we condemned men to death, was the truth pure and unsullied. And they swore a binding oath, although we had not asked them, that their hearts had been opened and their doubts removed, and that they were

convinced whoever said, "Oh prophet of God!" or "Oh Ibn 'Abbes!" or "Oh 'Abdul Qadir!"⁸ or called on any other created being, thus entreating him to turn away evil or grant what is good, (where the power belongs to God alone) such as recovery from sickness, or victory over enemies, or protection from temptation, etc.; he is a *Mushrik*,⁹ guilty of the most heinous form of *shirk*, his blood shall be shed and property confiscated. Nor is it any excuse that he believes the effective first cause in the movements of the universe is God, and only supplicates those mortals . . . to intercede for him or bring him nearer the presence of God, so that he may obtain what he requires from Him through them or through their intercession. Again, the tombs which had been erected over the remains of the pious, had become in these times as it were idols where the people went to pray for what they required; they humbled themselves before them, and called upon those lying in them, in their distress, just as did those who were in darkness before the coming of Muhammad.

When this was over, we razed all the large tombs in the city which the people generally worshipped and believed in, and by which they hoped to obtain benefits or ward off evil, so that there did not remain an idol to be adored in that pure city, for which God be praised. Then the taxes and customs we abolished, all the different kinds of instruments for using tobacco we destroyed, and tobacco itself we proclaimed forbidden.¹⁰ Next we burned the dwellings of those selling *hashish*, and living in open wickedness, and issued a proclamation, directing the people to constantly exercise themselves in prayer. They

⁴Not cutting down a defeated enemy's trees or hunting the enemy's animals was considered an act of mercy by the victor.

⁵A personal prayer uttered by a Muslim.

⁶*Shirk* is the opposite of surrender to God and the acceptance and recognition of His reality. It may mean atheism, paganism, or polytheism. It is the fundamental error at the root of all sin and transgression.

⁷The first pillar of Islam is the creed, which affirms "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God." The four other pillars are daily prayer; almsgiving;

fasting during the month of Ramadan; and pilgrimage, at least once in every Muslim's life if possible, to Mecca, the city of Muhammad's birth and revelation.

⁸Calling out in prayer the name of Muhammad or these early caliphs in the Abbassid line detracted from the majesty of God.

⁹A person guilty of *shirk*.

¹⁰The Wahhabis saw no Qur'anic basis for the use of tobacco; its use is still rare in modern Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabi Islam is predominant.

were not to pray in separate groups according to the different Imams;¹¹ but all were directed to arrange themselves at each time of prayer behind any Imam who is a follower of any of the four Imams (may the Lord be pleased with them!). For in this way the Lord would be worshiped by as it were one voice, the faithful of all sects would become friendly disposed towards each other, and all dissensions would cease. . . .

We believe that good and evil proceed from God, the exalted; that nothing happens in His kingdom, but what He commands; that created beings do not possess free will, and are not accountable for their own acts; but on the contrary they obtain rank and spiritual reward, merely as an act of grace, and suffer punishment justly, for God is not bound to do anything for His slaves. We believe that the faithful will see Him in the end, but we do not know under what form, as it was beyond our comprehension. And in the same way we follow Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in matters of detail; but we do not reject anyone who follows any of the four Imams, as do the Shi'ites, the Zaidiyyahs, and the Imamiyyahs,¹² &c. Nor do we admit them in any way to act openly according to their vicious creeds; on the contrary, we compelled them to follow one of the four Imams. We do not claim to exercise our reason in all matters of religion, and of our faith, save that we follow our judgment where a point is clearly demonstrated to us in either the Qur'an or the Sunnah. . . . We do not command the destruction of any writings except such as tend to cast people into infidelity to injure their faith, such as those on Logic, which have been prohibited by all Divines. But we are not very exacting with regard to books or documents of this nature, if they appear to assist our opponents, we destroy them. . . . We do not consider it proper

to make Arabs prisoners of war, nor have we done so, neither do we fight with other nations. Finally, we do not consider it lawful to kill women or children. . . .

We believe that our prophet Muhammad is more exalted by God than any other created being; that he is alive, lives in his grave a life quicker [more animated] than that declared by revelation unto martyrs, and that he can hear the salutations of those who salute him. We consider pilgrimage is supported by legal custom, but it should not be undertaken except to a mosque, and for the purpose of praying in it. Therefore, whoever performs pilgrimage for this purpose, is not wrong, and doubtless those who spend the precious moments of their existence in invoking the Prophet, shall, according to Hadith,¹³ obtain happiness in this world and the next, and he will dispel their sorrows. We do not deny miraculous powers to the saints, but on the contrary allow them. They are under the guidance of the Lord, so long as they continue to follow the way pointed out in the laws and obey the prescribed rules. But whether alive or dead, they must not be made the object of any form of worship. . . .

We prohibit those forms of Bid'ah¹⁴ that affect religion or pious works. Thus drinking coffee, reciting poetry, praising kings, do not affect religion or pious works and are not prohibited. . . .

All games are lawful. Our prophet allowed play in his mosque. So it is lawful to chide and punish persons in various ways; to train them in the use of different weapons; or to use anything which tends to encourage warriors in battle, such as a war-drum. But it must not be accompanied with musical instruments. These are forbidden, and indeed the difference between them and a war drum is clear. . . .

¹¹The author uses the term *imam* to refer to the founders of the four major schools of Sunni Muslim jurisprudence: Abu Hanifah (d. 767), founder of the Hanafite school; Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), founder of the Maliki school; al-Shafi'i (d. 820), founder of the Shafi'i school; and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), founder of the Hanbali school. The Wahhabis were Hanbalis, but did not reject the authority of the other schools.

¹²Zaidiyyahs and Imamiyyahs were Shi'ite sects.

¹³The tradition, or written record, of the thought and deeds of Muhammad as recorded by his companions.

¹⁴Erroneous or improper customs that grew after the third generation of Muslims died out.

Whoever is desirous of knowing our belief, let him come to us at al Dir'iyya,¹⁵ and he will see what will gladden his heart, and his eyes will be pleased in reading the compilations on the different kinds of knowledge. . . . He will see God praised in a pleasing manner; the assistance He gives in establishing the true faith; the kindness, which He exerts among the weak and feeble,

between inhabitants and travelers. . . . He is our Agent, our Master, our Deliverer. May peace and the blessing of God be upon our prince Muhammad and on his family and his companions!

'Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of 'Abdul-Wahhab, wrote this in Muharram, 1218. [April 1803]

¹⁵The Wahhabi capital, some fifteen miles northeast of Riyadh.

Jihad in the Western Sudan



54 ▼ *Usman dan Fodio,* *SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS*

Although merchants and teachers from North Africa and Arabia had introduced Islam to Africa's western and central Sudan as early as the tenth century, by 1800 Islam was not truly dominant in the region. It was still a religion of the cities, where resident Muslim merchants had established Islamic communities, built mosques, introduced Arabic, and made converts. Many converts, however, continued non-Muslim religious rites and festivals, and in rural areas peasants and herders remained animists. Rulers became Muslims in name, but often less for religious reasons than to ingratiate themselves with the merchant community and to attract Islamic scholars to their service as advisors, interpreters, and scribes. Most rulers tolerated their subjects' pagan practices, and many participated in such practices themselves.

This all changed as a result of a series of *jihads*, or holy wars, that swept across the Sudan in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries. Dedicated Muslims took up arms against non-Muslim or nominal Muslim rulers, and, after seizing power, suppressed traditional African religion and imposed a pure and strict form of Islam on their new subjects. In a matter of decades, these movements redrew the political and religious maps of the Sudan.

The first major jihad of the era, known as the Sokoto Jihad, took place in Hausaland in the early nineteenth century under the leadership of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817). Hausaland, an area that straddles the Niger River and today makes up the northern part of Nigeria, had been settled by Hausa speakers in the tenth century but also had a substantial population of Fulani, pastoralists who had begun to migrate into the area in the 1500s. The region was divided into approximately a dozen principalities, all of which had emerged after the Songhai Empire's collapse around 1600.

Usman dan Fodio, a member of a Fulani clan with a tradition of Islamic scholarship and teaching, was a member of the *Qadiriyya*, a Sufi brotherhood that dates back to the twelfth century. Beginning in the 1770s, he began to travel and

preach throughout rural Hausaland, denouncing corrupt Islamic practices and the tyrannical and venal rulers who tolerated them. His calls for religious and political renewal gained him many followers among the Fulani, who considered themselves oppressed by their rulers, and some Hausa farmers, who were feeling the effects of drought and land shortages. In 1804 when the Sultan of Gobir denounced Usman and prepared to attack the reformer's followers, Usman called on his supporters to take up arms and begin a jihad against Hausaland's rulers. By the late 1810s, Usman controlled Hausaland and established the Kingdom of Sokoto. After his retirement from public life Usman's son and brother extended the campaign to the south and east. The era of Sudanese jihads had begun in earnest.

Usman wrote close to one hundred books on politics, religion, marriage customs, and education. Brief excerpts from four of them are included here. Together they provide a sampling of his thoughts on religion, government, and society.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What policies and values of the Hausa sultans does Usman criticize? Why?
2. How do the religious failings of the Hausa princes prevent them from being just and equitable rulers?
3. What groups in Hausa society would have been most likely to respond positively to Usman's criticisms of the sultans?
4. What is Usman's message concerning the treatment of Muslim women? Is it a message of equality with men?

THE FAULTS OF THE HAUSA RULERS¹

And one of the ways of their government is the building of their sovereignty upon three things: the people's persons, their honor, and their possessions; and whomsoever they wish to kill or exile or violate his honor or devour his wealth they do so in pursuit of their lusts, without any right in the *Shari'a*.² One of the ways of their government is their imposing on the people monies not laid down by the *Shari'a*. One of the ways of their government is their intentionally eating whatever food they wish, whether it is religiously permitted or forbidden, and wearing

whatever clothes they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and drinking what beverages they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and riding whatever riding beasts they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and taking what women they wish without marriage contract, and living in decorated palaces, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and spreading soft carpets as they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden.

... One of the ways of their government is to place many women in their houses, until the number of women of some of them amounts to one thousand or more. One of the ways of their government is that a man puts the affairs of his

¹An excerpt from *Kitab al-farq*, "The Book of Difference between the Government of Muslims and Unbelievers," probably written around 1806.

²*Shari'a*, or literally "path" in Arabic, is the word for Islamic law.

women into the hands of the oldest one, and every one of the others is like a slave-woman under her. One of the ways of their government is to delay in the paying of a debt, and this is injustice. One of the ways of their government is what the superintendent of the market takes from all the parties to a sale, and the meat which he takes on each market day from the butchers, . . . and one of the ways of their government is the cotton and other things which they take in the course of the markets. . . . One of the ways of their governments is the taking of people's beasts of burden without their permission to carry the sultan's food to him. Whoever follows his beast to the place where they unload it, they return it to him but he who does not follow, his beast is lost.

. . . One of the ways of their government which is also well known is that whoever dies in their country, they take his property, and they call it "inheritance," and they know that it is without doubt injustice.³ One of the ways of their government is to impose tax on merchants, and other travellers. One of the ways of their government, which is also well known, is that one may not pass by their farms, nor cross them without suffering bad treatment from their slaves. One of the ways of their government, which is also well known, is that if the people's animals go among their animals, they do not come out again unless they give a proportion of them, and if the sultan's animals stray, and are found spoiling the cultivated land and other things, they are not driven off. . . .

One of the ways of their government, which is also well known, is that if you have an adversary in law and he precedes you to them, and gives them some money, then your word will not be accepted by them, even though they know for a certainty of your truthfulness, unless you give them more than your adversary gave. One of the

ways of their government is to shut the door in the face of the needy. . . . Therefore do not follow their way in their government, and do not imitate them. . . .

ROYAL RELIGION⁴

It is well known that in our time Islam in these countries mentioned above is widespread among people other than the sultans. As for the sultans, they are undoubtedly unbelievers, even though they may profess the religion of Islam, because they practice polytheistic rituals and turn people away from the path of God and raise the flag of worldly kingdom above the banner of Islam. All this is unbelief according to the consensus of opinion.⁵

The government of a country is the government of its king without question. If the king is a Muslim, his land is Muslim; if he is an Unbeliever, his land is a land of Unbelievers. In these circumstances it is obligatory for anyone to leave it for another country.⁶ There is no dispute that the sultans of these countries venerate certain places, certain trees, and certain rocks and offer sacrifice to them. This constitutes unbelief according to the consensus of opinion.

I say this on the basis of the common practice known about them, but I do not deny the existence of some Muslims here and there among them. Those however are rare and there is no place for what is rare in legal decisions.

THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND SLAVES⁷

Most of our educated men leave their wives, their daughters, and the slaves morally abandoned, like beasts, without teaching them what God prescribes should be taught them, and without instructing them in the articles of the Law which

³A grievance of foreign Muslim merchants who might die while residing in a Hausa city.

⁴From *Tanbih al-ikhwan 'ala ahwal ard al-Sudan*, "Concerning the Government of Our Country and Neighboring Countries in the Sudan," written around 1811.

⁵Consensus of the Muslim community, usually interpreted

to mean the opinions of leading legal scholars, was a recognized source of Muslim law.

⁶Usman did just this when he led his followers out of the sultanate of Gobir after its ruler had turned against him.

⁷From *Nur al-albab*, "Light of the Intellectuals."

concern them. Thus, they leave them ignorant of the rules regarding ablutions,⁸ prayer, fasting, business dealings, and other duties which they have to fulfil, and which God commands that they should be taught.

Men treat these beings like household implements which become broken after long use and which are then thrown out on the dung-heap. This is an abominable crime! Alas! How can they thus shut up their wives, their daughters, and their slaves in the darkness of ignorance, while daily they impart knowledge to their students? In truth, they act out of egoism, and if they devote themselves to their pupils, that is nothing but hypocrisy and vain ostentation on their part.

Their conduct is blameworthy, for to instruct one's wives, daughters, and captives is a positive duty, while to impart knowledge to students is only a work over and above what is expected, and there is no doubt but that the one takes precedence over the other.

Muslim women — Do not listen to the speech of those who are misguided and who sow the seed of error in the heart of another; they deceive you when they stress obedience to your husbands without telling you of obedience to God and to his Messenger,⁹ (May God show him bounty and grant him salvation), and when they say that the woman finds her happiness in obedience to her husband.

They seek only their own satisfaction, and that is why they impose upon you tasks which the Law of God and that of his Prophet have never especially assigned to you. Such are — the preparation of food-stuffs, the washing of clothes, and other duties which they like to impose upon you, while they neglect to teach you what God and the Prophet have prescribed for you.

Yes, the woman owes submission to her husband, publicly as well as in intimacy, even if he is one of the humble people of the world, and to disobey him is a crime, at least so long as he

does not command what God condemns; in that case she must refuse, since it is wrong of a human creature to disobey the Creator.

THE CALL TO HOLY WAR¹⁰

That to make war upon the heathen king who does not say "There is no God but Allah" on account of the custom of his town, and who makes no profession of Islam, is obligatory by assent,¹¹ and that to take the government from him is obligatory by assent.

And that to make war upon the king who is an apostate, and who has abandoned the religion of Islam for the religion of heathendom is obligatory by assent, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by assent; And that to make war against the king who is an apostate — who has not abandoned the religion of Islam as far as the profession of it is concerned, but who mingles the observances of Islam with the observances of heathendom, like the kings of Hausaland for the most part — is also obligatory by assent, and that to take the government from him is obligatory by assent.

And to make war upon backsliding Muslims who do not own allegiance to any of the Emirs of the Faithful,¹² is obligatory by assent, if they be summoned to give allegiance and they refuse, until they enter into allegiance; . . .

And that residence in enemy territory is unlawful by assent; . . .

And to enslave the freeborn among the Muslims is unlawful by assent, whether they reside in the territory of Islam, or in enemy territory;

And to make war upon the oppressors is obligatory by assent, and that wrongfully to devour their property is unlawful by assent, for "Use is made of their armor against them, and afterwards it is returned to them"; and their enslavement is unlawful by assent; . . .

⁸Washing one's body as part of a religious rite.

⁹Muhammad.

¹⁰From *Wathiqat ahl al-Sudan wa man sha' Allah min al-ikhwan*, "Dispatch to the Folk of the Sudan and to Whom

so Allah Wills among the Brethren," probably written in 1804 or 1805.

¹¹"By assent" refers to the consensus of the Muslim community.

¹²"Emirs of the faithful" were Usman's lieutenants.

Chapter 10

Change and Continuity in East Asia and Oceania

For the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were times of turmoil and decline after an era of strength and expansion. In East and Southeast Asia, this pattern was reversed. Japan endured civil war throughout the sixteenth century, a period that also saw the arrival of Europeans with their firearms and Catholic religious beliefs. China entered into a period of dynastic decline at the end of the sixteenth century when the quality and effectiveness of Ming emperors deteriorated. Factionalism paralyzed the central administration, and peasant violence escalated in the face of rising taxes and official corruption. Then in 1644 military weakness and internal decay led to invasion by the Manchus, who seized power and established China's last imperial dynasty, the Qing. Southeast Asia, which produced the spices so coveted by Europeans, also experienced turmoil in the sixteenth century. The Spaniards conquered the Philippines, while the Portuguese took over Malacca on Malaysia's west coast and bullied their way into the region's trade networks.

During the seventeenth century, however, conflict and tensions abated. In Japan recovery began in 1603 when the Tokugawa clan took power and ended the century-long civil war, while in China it began in 1644 when Manchu invaders replaced the Ming and began to reinvigorate the government. Although China and Japan did not lack problems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in comparison to what had gone before and what would follow, these were years of orderly government and social harmony.

These also were years in which European influence in the region grew but slightly, if at all. China's Manchu rulers continued to limit European merchants' activities to Macao and Guangzhou, and beginning in the early 1700s they curtailed European missionary activity. The Manchus also checked Russian expansion in the Amur Valley. In 1689 they negotiated the Treaty of Nerchinsk, by which the Russians abandoned their trading posts in Manchuria in return for modest commercial privileges in Beijing. In Japan the Tokugawa shoguns expelled all foreigners, outlawed Christianity, and limited trade with Europeans to one Dutch ship a year. In the East Indies the Dutch, after forcing out the Portuguese and establishing a political base in Java, were content after the mid 1600s to protect rather than expand their gains. Spain's involvement in the region never extended beyond the Philippines.

By the end of the 1700s, however, signs of change were evident. In Japan economic expansion, urbanization, and political tranquility created new tensions by enriching merchants while undermining the function and financial base of the military aristocracy. In China rapid population growth caused hardship among the peasant masses by driving up the cost of land; moreover, around 1800 budgetary shortfalls, higher taxes, abuses of the civil service examination system, and neglect of roads, bridges, and dikes were signs of impending dynastic decline.

In addition, European pressures in the region once more were growing. In the 1780s, the English began to settle Australia and New Zealand. French missionaries increased their activities in Vietnam. In 1800 the Dutch government stripped the Dutch East India Company of its administrative responsibilities in Southeast Asia and tightened its grip on the region's agriculture and trade. From their base in India British merchants opened a new chapter in the history of trade with China after finding a product that millions of Chinese deeply craved. The product, grown and processed in India, packed into 133-pound chests, shipped to Guangzhou, sold for silver to Chinese merchants, and sold again to millions of addicts, was opium. For East and Southeast Asians and for the peoples of the South Pacific islands, a new era of upheaval was about to begin.

China's Revival under the Qing

After the last Ming emperor hanged himself in April 1644 and the bandit-emperor Li Zicheng fled Beijing in June, Manchu invaders placed the child emperor Shunzhi on the throne, and China's last dynasty, the Qing, began its rule. During the next thirty-five years, Manchu armies fought from Burma to Taiwan, hunting down and executing Ming supporters, crushing their armies, and suppressing rebellion. By 1680 the Manchus controlled China and could fully attend to the challenge of ruling their 150 million new subjects.

The Manchus made it clear from the start that they were the rulers and the Chinese their subjects. They ordered courtiers and government officials to abandon the loose-fitting robes of the Ming for the high-collared tight jackets favored by the Manchus. They also required all males to shave their foreheads and braid their hair in the back in a Manchu style despised by the Chinese.

In most other ways, however, the Manchus maintained Chinese institutions and adapted to Chinese culture. They embraced the Chinese principle of centralized monarchy, learned the Chinese language, and supported Confucian scholarship. They reinstated the civil service examinations, which had been abandoned during the last decades of Ming rule. Although Manchus were disproportionately represented in the bureaucracy, Chinese were allocated half of all important offices, and gradually Chinese scholar-officials began to support and serve the new foreign dynasty.

From 1661 through 1799, China had but three emperors: Kangxi (r. 1661–1722), Yongzhen (r. 1722–1736), and Qianlong (r. 1736–1796), who resigned as emperor in 1796 to avoid exceeding the long reign of his grandfather Kangxi but who actually ruled until 1799. By any standard, the years of their rule were among the most impressive in all of Chinese history. China reached its greatest size as a result of military campaigns in central Asia. Agriculture flourished, trade expanded, and China's population grew from an estimated 150 million at the end of the seventeenth century to over 300 million a century later. China's cultural vitality was no less remarkable. The era's literary output included China's greatest novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin, and painting and scholarship flourished under Qing patronage. Kangxi sponsored a dictionary of the Chinese language and an encyclopedia that reached 5,000 volumes. Qianlong supported the work of scholars and copyists who compiled an anthology of 3,450 historical, literary, and philosophical texts which with commentaries totaled 36,000 volumes.

Toward the end of Qianlong's reign, however, the first signs of decline began to appear. Rural poverty worsened, military effectiveness declined, and factionalism and favoritism at the imperial court resurfaced. Nonetheless, it was neither farfetched nor fanciful when France's leading eighteenth-century writer, Voltaire, described Qing China as a model of moral and ethical government and praised Qianlong as the ideal philosopher-king.

Emperor Kangxi Views His World



55 ▼ *Kangxi, SELF-PORTRAIT*

In 1661 a seven-year-old boy became the second emperor of the Qing Dynasty after the unexpected death of his father, Shunzhi. His name was Kangxi, and during his long reign, which lasted until 1722, he brought order to a China racked by decades of Ming misrule, internal chaos, and invasion. He crushed the last vestiges of Ming resistance, fortified China's borders, revitalized the civil service examination system, won the support of China's scholar-officials, managed to ease tensions between ethnic Chinese and their Manchu conquerors, and brought new vigor and direction to government. A generous supporter of writers, artists, poets, scholars, and craftsmen, Kangxi himself was also a scholar and writer of distinction. He studied Confucianism, Latin, music, mathematics, and science and left behind a rich store of poems, essays, aphorisms, letters, edicts, and sayings.

In 1974, the historian Jonathan Spence drew on these writings and statements to compile a self-portrait of the emperor. In the following excerpts the emperor expresses his views on justice, government administration, and Europeans, with whom China's relations took a decisive turn for the worse during his reign.

Since the late sixteenth century, members of the Society of Jesus, a Catholic religious order, had provided an intellectual and cultural link between China and the West. Prized by emperors for their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics and their skills as cartographers, artists, and architects, these Jesuit fathers had been welcomed at the imperial court in Beijing, where they wore Chinese garb, learned Chinese, and paid homage to the emperor. They also managed to convert some two hundred court officials, who in keeping with a policy initiated by the founder of the Jesuit mission in China, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), were permitted to practice Chinese rites such as ceremonies in honor of deceased ancestors and public homage to Confucius. Kangxi had an avid interest in Western learning, and in 1692 he granted toleration to Christianity and permission to the Jesuits to preach outside Beijing. By the early eighteenth century as many as three hundred thousand Chinese may have been Roman Catholics.

In the early 1700s, however, the Catholic missionary effort experienced a fatal schism. Members of the Franciscan and Dominican religious orders, fresh from their successful missionary efforts in the Philippines and relative newcomers to the field of Chinese missions, attacked the Jesuit position on Confucian rites and successfully won over Pope Clement XI to their point of view. In 1706 a papal envoy to China, Charles de Tournon, announced the pope's decision that traditional Confucian ceremonies were religious, not civil rites, and henceforth would be prohibited for Chinese Catholics. An angry Kangxi responded with a ban on Christian preaching, and the Qing assault on Christianity was underway. Under Kangxi's successor, the Jesuits lost their position at Beijing, and the main source of contact between the imperial court and the intellectual world of the West disappeared.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does Kangxi's treatment of delinquent and dishonest government officials reveal about his philosophy of government?
2. How do Confucian values affect Kangxi's decisions about whether to be lenient to men accused of killing their wives?
3. What are Kangxi's views of the civil service examination system? What ideas did he have about improving the system?
4. What role do eunuchs play in Kangxi's administration? How does this compare with the situation during the late Ming Era (Chapter 7, source 32)?
5. According to Kangxi, what are the strengths and limitations of Western science and mathematics?
6. According to Kangxi, what specific issues were involved in the dispute over Chinese rites?
7. What other characteristics and actions of the missionaries led to Kangxi's decision to ban further Christian preaching?

AN EMPEROR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Giving life to people and killing people — those are the powers that the emperor has. He knows that administrative errors in government bureaus can be rectified, but that a criminal who has been executed cannot be brought back to life any more than a chopped string can be joined together again. He knows, too, that sometimes people have to be persuaded into morality by the example of an execution. . . .

Hu Jianzheng was a subdirector of the Court of Sacrificial Worship whose family terrorized their native area in Jiangsu, seizing people's lands and wives and daughters, and murdering people after falsely accusing them of being thieves. . . . I ordered . . . that he be executed with his family and in his native place, so that all the local gentry might learn how I regarded such behavior. Corporal Yambu was sentenced to death for gross corruption in the shipyards. I not only agreed to the penalty but sent guards officer Uge to supervise the beheading, and ordered that all

shipyard personnel from generals down to private soldiers kneel down in full armor and listen to my warning that execution would be their fate as well unless they ended their evil ways. . . .

The final penalty of lingering death¹ must be given in cases of treason, as the Legal Code requires. . . . When Ilaguksan Khutuktu, who had had his spies in the lamas' residences so that they would welcome Galdan's² army into China, and had plotted with Galdan and encouraged him in his rebellion, was finally caught, I had him brought to Beijing and cut to death in the Yellow Temple, in the presence of all the Manchu and Mongol princes, and the senior officials, both civil and military. . . .

Of all the things that I find distasteful, none is more so than giving a final verdict on the death sentences that are sent to me for ratification. . . .

Each year we went through the lists, sparing sixteen out of sixty-three at one session, eighteen out of fifty-seven at another, thirty-three out of eighty-three at another. For example, it was clear to me that the three cases of husbands

¹A slow, painful, and humiliating punishment in which a person died from the administration of numerous cuts on the body.

²A lama was a Buddhist priest, or monk, in Tibet, Mongolia, and western China. Galdan was a leader of a Western Mon-

gol tribe who in the late seventeenth century conquered much of Chinese Turkestan and Outer Mongolia; when he threatened Beijing, Kangxi raised an army and crushed him in 1696.

killing wives that came up . . . were all quite different. The husband who hit his wife with an ax because she nagged at him for drinking, and then murdered her after another domestic quarrel . . . how could any extenuating circumstances be found? But Baoer, who killed his wife for swearing at his parents; and Meng, whose wife failed to serve him properly and used foul language so that he killed her — they could have their sentences reduced. . . .

EUNUCHS AND BUREAUCRATS

You have to define and reward people in accordance with their status in life. If too much grace is shown to inferiors they become lazy and uppity and will be sure to stir up trouble — and if you neglect them they will abuse you behind your back. That was why I insisted on such strictness when the eunuch Jian Wenzai beat a commoner to death, saying strangulation was not enough. For eunuchs are basically Yin³ in nature. They are quite different from ordinary people; when weak with age they babble like babies. In my court I never let them get involved with government — even the few eunuchs-of-the-presence with whom I might chatter or exchange family jokes were never allowed to discuss politics. I only have about four hundred, as opposed to the immense numbers there were in the Ming, and I keep them working at menial jobs; I ignore their frowns and smiles and make sure that they stay poor. Whereas in the later Ming Dynasty, besides being so extravagant and reckless, they obtained the power to write endorsements on the emperors' memorials, for the emperors were unable to read the one- or two-thousand-character memorials that flowed in; and the eunuchs in turn passed the memorials on to *their* subordinates to handle.

³In East Asian thought, Yin and Yang were the two complementary principles or forces that make up all aspects and phenomena of life. Yin is conceived of as Earth, female, dark, passive, and absorbing.

⁴The banner system was a method of military organization under the Qing in which fighting men were grouped in

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There are too many men who claim to be pure scholars and yet are stupid and arrogant; we'd be better off with less talk of moral principle and more practice of it. Even in those who have been the best officials in my reign there are obvious failings. . . . Peng Peng was always honest and courageous — when robbers were in his district he simply put on his armor, rode out, and routed them — but when angry he was wild and vulgar in his speech, and showed real disrespect. Zhao Shenjiao was completely honest, traveled with only thirteen servants and no personal secretaries at all, but was too fond of litigation and was constantly getting the common people involved in complex cases. . . . And Zhang Pengke, whom I praised so often and kept in the highest offices, could write a memorial so stupid that I ordered it printed up and posted in major cities so that everyone could read it — for he claimed that the drop in the river's level was due to a miracle performed by the spirit of the waters, when the real reason was that no rain had fallen for six months in the upper reaches of the Yellow River. . . .

This is one of the worst habits of the great officials, that if they are not recommending their teachers or their friends for high office then they recommend their relations. This evil practice used to be restricted to the Chinese: they've always formed cliques and then used their recommendations to advance the other members of the clique. Now the practice has spread to the Chinese Bannermen⁴ like Yu Chenglong, and even the Manchus, who used to be so loyal, recommend men from their own Banners, knowing them to have a foul reputation, and will refuse to help the Chinese. . . .

In 1694 I noted that we were losing talent because of the ways the exams were being

divisions identified by different colored banners. Bannermen were given grants of land and small stipends for their service. Chinese (as opposed to Manchu) bannermen were originally drawn from the ranks of Chinese soldiers and officers who had surrendered to the Manchus and joined their cause early in their struggle against Ming supporters.

conducted: even in the military exams most of the successful candidates were from Zhejiang and Jiangnan, while there was only one from Henan and one from Shanxi.⁵ The successful ones had often done no more than memorize old examination answer books, whereas the best *should* be selected on the basis of riding and archery. Yet it is always the strong men from the western provinces who are eager to serve in the army, while not only are troops from Zhejiang and Jiangnan among the weakest, they also pass on their posts to their relatives who are also weak.

Even among the examiners there are those who are corrupt, those who do not understand basic works, those who ask detailed questions about practical matters of which they know nothing, those who insist entirely on memorization of the *Classics*⁶ and refuse to prescribe essays, those who put candidates from their own geographical area at the top of the list, or those who make false claims about their abilities to select the impoverished and deserving. . . . Other candidates hire people to sit [take] the exams for them, or else pretend to be from a province that has a more liberal quota than their own. It's usually easy enough to check the latter, since I've learnt to recognize the accents from thirteen provinces, and if you watch the person and study his voice you can tell where he is really from. As to the other problems, one can overcome some of them by holding the exams under rigorous armed supervision and then reading the exam papers oneself.

DEALING WITH EUROPEANS

The rare can become common, as with the lions and other animals that foreign ambassadors like to give us and my children are now accustomed to; . . .

Western skills are a case in point: in the late Ming Dynasty, when the Westerners first brought the gnomon,⁷ the Chinese thought it a rare treasure until they understood its use. And when the Emperor Shunzhi got a small chiming clock in 1653, he kept it always near him; but now we have learned to balance the springs and to adjust the chimes and finally to make the whole clock, so that my children can have ten chiming clocks each to play with, if they want them. Similarly, we learned in a short time to make glassware that is superior to that made in the West, and our lacquer would be better than theirs, too, were it not that their wet sea climate gives a better sheen than the dry and dusty Chinese climate ever could. . . .

I realized, too, that Western mathematics has its uses. . . . I ordered the Jesuits Thomas, Gerbillon, and Bouvet to study Manchu also, and to compose treatises in that language on Western arithmetic and the geometry of Euclid.⁸ In the early 1690's I often worked several hours a day with them. With Verbiest I had examined each stage of the forging of cannons, and made him build a water fountain that operated in conjunction with an organ, and erect a windmill in the court; with the new group — who were later joined by Brocard and Jartoux, and worked in the Yangxin Palace under the general direction of my Eldest Son Yinti — I worked on clocks and mechanics. Pereira taught me to play the tune, "*P'u-yen-chou*" on the harpsichord and the structure of the eight-note scale, Pedrini taught my sons musical theory, and Gherardini painted portraits at the Court. I also learned to calculate the weight and volume of spheres, cubes, and cones, and to measure distances and the angle of river banks. On inspection tours later I used these Western methods to show my officials how to make more accurate calculations when planning their river works. . . . I showed them how to

⁵Zhejiang and Jiangnan were southeast coastal regions of China; Henan and Shanxi were north-central provinces.

⁶A clearly specified set of books from Chinese antiquity, thought to embody Confucian wisdom.

⁷A sundial.

⁸The ancient Greek mathematician who lived around 300 B.C.E., and whose work laid the foundation for the study of geometry.

calculate circumferences and assess the area of a plot of land, even if its borders were as jagged as dogs' teeth, drawing diagrams for them on the ground with an arrow; and calculated the flow of river water through a lock gate by multiplying the volume that flowed in a few seconds to get a figure for the whole day. . . .

But I was careful not to refer to these Westerners as "Great Officials." . . . For even though some of the Western methods are different from our own, and may even be an improvement, there is little about them that is new. The principles of mathematics all derive from the *Book of Changes*,⁹ and the Western methods are Chinese in origin: this algebra — "A-erh-chu-pa-erh" — springs from an Eastern word.¹⁰ And though it was indeed the Westerners who showed us something our ancient calendar experts did not know — namely how to calculate the angle of the northern pole — this but shows the truth what Zhu Xi¹¹ arrived at through his investigation of things: the earth is like the yolk within an egg.

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On the question of the Chinese Rites that might be practiced by the Western missionaries, de Tournon¹² would not speak, though I sent messages to him repeatedly. I had agreed with the formulation the Beijing fathers had drawn up in 1700: that Confucius was honored by the Chinese as a master, but his name was not invoked in prayer for the purpose of gaining happiness, rank, or wealth; that worship of ancestors was an expression of love and filial remembrance, not intended to bring protection to the worshiper; and that there was no idea when an ancestral

tablet was erected, that the soul of the ancestor dwelt in that tablet. And when sacrifices were offered to Heaven it was not the blue existent sky that was addressed, but the lord and creator of all things. If the ruler Shang-ti was sometimes called Heaven, *T'ien*, that had no more significance than giving honorific names to the emperor.

If de Tournon didn't reply, the Catholic Bishop Maigrot¹³ did, . . . telling me that Heaven is a material thing and should not be worshiped, and that one should invoke only the name "Lord of Heaven" to show the proper reverence. Maigrot wasn't merely ignorant of Chinese literature, he couldn't even recognize the simplest Chinese characters; yet he chose to discuss the falsity of the Chinese moral system. . . .

Even little animals mourn their dead mothers for many days; these Westerners who want to treat their dead with indifference are not even equal to animals. How could they be compared with Chinese? We venerate Confucius because of his doctrines of respect for virtue, his system of education, his inculcation of love for superiors and ancestors. Westerners venerate their own saints because of their actions. They paint pictures of men with wings and say, "These represent heavenly spirits, swift as if they had wings, though in reality there are no men with wings." I do not find it appropriate to dispute this doctrine, yet with superficial knowledge Maigrot discussed Chinese sanctity. . . .

Every country must have some spirits that it reveres. This is true for our dynasty, as for Mongols or Mohammedans, Miao or Lolo,¹⁴ or other foreigners. Just as everyone fears some-

⁹One of the Classics, the *Book of Changes* was a work of divination that relied on the analysis of trigrams and hexagrams.

¹⁰*Algebra* is derived from the Arabic word *Al-jabr*. Kangxi is correct when he asserts that China had a long tradition of achievement in algebra, geometry, and trigonometry dating back at least as far as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.).

¹¹Zhu Xi (1130–1200 C.E.) was a famous commentator on Confucius and was China's leading philosopher after the classical age.

¹²Charles de Tournon (1668–1710) was a special papal envoy sent to India and China to oversee Catholic missions.

His demand that Chinese Christians abandon traditional rites was deeply offensive to Kangxi. The emperor ordered him to prison, where he died in 1710.

¹³Charles Maigrot (1652–1730) was the apostolic vicar to China. His opposition to the Jesuit position on rites led to his expulsion from China in 1707.

¹⁴The Miao (also known as the Hmong) and Lolo were indigenous people of southwest China and upland Southeast Asia.

thing, some snakes but not toads, some toads but not snakes; and as all countries have different pronunciations and different alphabets. But in this Catholic religion, the Society of Peter¹⁵ quarrels with the Jesuits, . . . and among the Jesuits the Portuguese want only their own nationals in their church while the French want only French in theirs. This violates the principles of religion. Such dissension cannot be inspired by the Lord of Heaven but by the Devil, who, I have heard the Westerners say, leads men to do evil since he can't do otherwise.

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Since I discovered on the Southern Tour of 1703 that there were missionaries wandering at will over China, I had grown cautious and determined to control them more tightly: to bunch them in the larger cities and in groups that included men from several different countries, to catalogue their names and residences, and to permit no

new establishments without my express permission. . . . I made all missionaries who wanted to stay on in China sign a certificate, stating that they would remain here for life and follow Ricci on the Rites. Forty or fifty who refused were exiled to Guangzhou; de Tournon was sent to Macao,¹⁶ his secretary, Appiani, we kept in prison in Beijing.

Despite these sterner restrictions, the Westerners continued to cause me anxiety. Our ships were being sold overseas; reports came of ironwood for keel blocks being shipped out of Guangdong; Luzon and Batavia¹⁷ became havens for Chinese outlaws; and the Dutch were strong in the Southern Seas. I ordered a general inquiry among residents of Beijing who had once lived on the coast, and called a conference of the coastal governors-general. "I fear that some time in the future China is going to get into difficulties with these various Western countries," I said. "That is my prediction."

¹⁵There is no such religious order as the "Society of Peter." Kangxi is probably referring to supporters of the papal position on rites; according to Catholics the authority of the pope can be traced back to the apostle Peter.

¹⁶Macao was the trading settlement some one hundred miles

from Guangzhou where by imperial order Western merchants were permitted to do business.

¹⁷Luzon was the major island of the Spanish-ruled Philippines; Batavia was the Dutch name for the island of Java in the East Indies.

China Rejects Increased Western Trade

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56 ▼ *Emperor Qianlong*

LETTER TO KING GEORGE III

Chinese restrictions on Western commerce in the eighteenth century increasingly frustrated and angered the British, who were strenuously seeking to expand their trade in East Asia. Agents of the East India Company could trade only outside the city walls of Guangzhou with government-appointed merchants and had to depart as soon as their business was completed. They were subject to Chinese laws and required to avoid activities that disturbed the Chinese such as entering Guangzhou city limits, learning Chinese, being accompanied by their wives, and much else. When the East India Company sent a representative, James Flint, to Beijing in 1759 to negotiate changes in the Guangzhou system, the unfortunate envoy was imprisoned for three years because he had learned Chinese, sailed to unapproved ports, and improperly addressed the emperor.

In 1792 the East India Company tried another approach by enlisting the British government in its cause. In 1792 Lord George Macartney, a diplomat with previous

service in Russia, the West Indies, and India, sailed to China on a British warship loaded with magnificent gifts for Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1796). He also delivered a letter to the emperor from King George III, requesting an easing of trade regulations, the publication of tariff lists, and permission to trade in cities other than Guangzhou. The request elicited the following response from the emperor.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What view of China's place in the world is revealed in Qianlong's letter?
2. What are the emperor's stated reasons for rejecting any expansion of British trade?
3. What unstated reasons may have affected the emperor's decision?
4. The British government made no immediate effort to change Qianlong's mind. But if it had made such an attempt, how might it have responded to Qianlong's arguments?

You, O King, from afar have yearned after the blessings of our civilization, and in your eagerness to come into touch with our converting influence have sent an Embassy across the sea bearing a memorial.¹ I have already taken note of your respectful spirit of submission, have treated your mission with extreme favor and loaded it with gifts, besides issuing a mandate to you, O King, and honoring you with the bestowal of valuable presents. Thus has my indulgence been manifested.

Yesterday your Ambassador petitioned my Ministers to memorialize me regarding your trade with China, but his proposal is not consistent with our dynastic usage and cannot be entertained. Hitherto, all European nations, including your own country's barbarian merchants, have carried on their trade with our Celestial Empire at Guangzhou. Such has been the procedure for many years, although our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its own borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our

own produce. But as the tea, silk, and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favor, that *hongs*² should be established at Guangzhou, so that your wants might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence. But your Ambassador has now put forward new requests which completely fail to recognize the Throne's principle to "treat strangers from afar with indulgence," and to exercise a pacifying control over barbarian tribes the world over. Moreover, our dynasty, ruling over the myriad races of the globe, extends the same benevolence towards all. Your England is not the only nation trading at Guangzhou. If other nations, following your bad example, wrongfully importune my ear with further impossible requests, how will it be possible for me to treat them with easy indulgence? Nevertheless, I do not forget the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of sea, nor do I overlook your excusable ignorance of the usages of our Celestial Empire. I have con-

¹Memorandum.

²Approximately ten Chinese merchant guilds that alone were licensed to trade with Westerners.

sequently commanded my Ministers to enlighten your Ambassador on the subject, and have ordered the departure of the mission. But I have doubts that after your Envoy's return he may fail to acquaint you with my view in detail or that he may be lacking in lucidity, so that I shall now proceed . . . to issue my mandate on each question separately. In this way you will, I trust, comprehend my meaning. . . .

Your request for a small island near Zhoushan,³ where your merchants may reside and goods be warehoused, arises from your desire to develop trade. As there are neither *bongs* nor interpreters in or near Zhoushan, where none of your ships has ever called, such an island would be utterly useless for your purposes. Every inch of the territory of our Empire is marked on the map and the strictest vigilance is exercised over it all: even tiny islets and far-lying sand-banks are clearly defined as part of the provinces to which they belong. Consider, moreover, that England is not the only barbarian land which wishes to establish . . . trade with our Empire: supposing that other nations were all to imitate your evil example and beseech me to present them each and all with a site for trading purposes, how could I possibly comply? This also is a flagrant infringement of the usage of my Empire and cannot possibly be entertained.

The next request, for a small site in the vicinity of Guangzhou city, where your barbarian merchants may lodge or, alternatively, that there be no longer any restrictions over their movements at Macao,⁴ has arisen from the following causes. Hitherto, the barbarian merchants of Europe have had a definite locality assigned to them at Macao for residence and trade, and have been forbidden to encroach an inch beyond the limits assigned to that locality. . . . If these restrictions were withdrawn, friction would inevitably occur between the Chinese and your barbarian subjects, and the results would militate against the benevolent

regard that I feel towards you. From every point of view, therefore, it is best that the regulations now in force should continue unchanged. . . .

Regarding your nation's worship of the Lord of Heaven, it is the same religion as that of other European nations. Ever since the beginning of history, sage Emperors and wise rulers have bestowed on China a moral system and inculcated a code, which from time immemorial has been religiously observed by the myriads of my subjects.⁵ There has been no hankering after heterodox doctrines. Even the European officials⁶ in my capital are forbidden to hold intercourse with Chinese subjects; they are restricted within the limits of their appointed residences, and may not go about propagating their religion. The distinction between Chinese and barbarian is most strict, and your Ambassador's request that barbarians shall be given full liberty to disseminate their religion is utterly unreasonable.

It may be, O King, that the above proposals have been wantonly made by your Ambassador on his own responsibility, or peradventure you yourself are ignorant of our dynastic regulations and had no intention of transgressing them when you expressed these wild ideas and hopes. . . . If, after the receipt of this explicit decree, you lightly give ear to the representations of your subordinates and allow your barbarian merchants to proceed to Zhejiang and Tianjin,⁷ with the object of landing and trading there, the ordinances of my Celestial Empire are strict in the extreme, and the local officials, both civil and military, are bound reverently to obey the law of the land. Should your vessels touch the shore, your merchants will assuredly never be permitted to land or to reside there, but will be subject to instant expulsion. In that event your barbarian merchants will have had a long journey for nothing. Do not say that you were not warned in due time! Tremblingly obey and show no negligence! A special mandate!

³A group of islands in the East China Sea at the entrance to Hangzhou Bay.

⁴Island colony west of Hong Kong where Europeans were allowed to carry on their trade.

⁵A reference to Confucianism.

⁶Missionaries.

⁷Two Chinese port cities.

Social and Economic Change in Tokugawa Japan

Tokugawa Ieyasu and his early successors implemented a four-part plan to strengthen their authority and stabilize Japan. They tightened control of powerful *daimyo* families, who maintained authority in their domains but whose ability to launch rebellions was crippled; they virtually severed contacts between Japan and the outside world; they officially sanctioned and supported Confucianism, with its conservatism and respect for authority; and they sought to freeze class divisions with military aristocrats at the top and farmers, artisans, and merchants below them. These policies were remarkably successful. Their subjects, who yearned for order as much as their rulers, experienced internal peace and stable government well into the nineteenth century.

Paradoxically, the demise of the Tokugawa regime in 1867 resulted in part from its success. Decades of peace fostered economic expansion accompanied by population growth, urbanization, and social mobility. Japan's population grew from approximately 18 million in 1600 to 30 million by the 1750s, and Edo (modern Tokyo) grew from a small village into a city with over a million inhabitants. These changes increased demand for all types of goods, especially rice, and certain groups such as richer peasants and merchants benefited. Most peasants, however, could not take advantage of the commercialization of agriculture, and by the mid eighteenth century, many were hard hit by land shortages and rising rents. In addition, Japan's military aristocrats, the *daimyo* and *samurai*, failed to benefit from the economic boom. Lavish personal spending and, in the case of the *daimyo*, the need to maintain residences in both Edo and their own domain, caused many to fall into debt.

While economic change was undermining the social basis of the Tokugawa regime, intellectual ferment was eroding its ideological underpinnings. As the memory of the sixteenth-century civil wars faded, the conservatism of Confucianism lost some of its appeal, and foreign ideas seemed less dangerous. In the eighteenth century two intellectual developments challenged state-sponsored Confucianism. Proponents of *National Learning*, or *Kokugaku*, rejected foreign influence, especially Confucianism, and dedicated themselves to the study and glorification of Japan's ancient literature and religious beliefs. Others developed an intense interest in European ideas, especially in medicine but also in botany, cartography, and gunnery. These endeavors were known as *Dutch Studies* because the only information about Europe came from the Dutch, who continued to trade on a limited basis with Japan even after the seclusion policy was adopted. By the late eighteenth century those who were dissatisfied with the Tokugawa regime did not lack models for a different future, something that solidly Confucian China did not have.

A Japanese Merchant Views His World



57 ▼ *Mitsui Takafusa,*

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MERCHANTS

Among the hundreds of family businesses begun in the early Tokugawa period, none can match the long-term economic success and political clout of the multifaceted business enterprise founded by the Mitsui family. With interests at first in *sake* brewing, pawn brokerage, and money changing, the family opened a dry goods store in Edo in 1673 and continued to diversify into banking, shipping, rice marketing, and mining. By 1800 it employed one thousand workers in its Edo shops alone, and a century later it was Japan's largest business conglomerate and a powerful force in creating the new industrialized Japan.

None of this could have been foreseen by Mitsui Takahira (1653–1737), the second head of the family business. He had seen too many new businesses flourish at the start only to fail because of high living and poor business sense on the part of second- and third-generation owners. In the hope that the Mitsui firm would avoid such a fate, in 1722 he drew up the Mitsui Family Code, a set of precepts of personal and business behavior for members of the family. He also compiled a set of sketches of approximately fifty business families from Osaka, Edo, and Kyoto, whose businesses had failed. The purpose of these sketches was to illustrate the points he had made in the code. Sometime in the late 1720s Mitsui Takahira's son, Takafusa, collated and edited his father's sketches and added an introduction and conclusion. Posterity has credited the son with the authorship of *Some Observations on Merchants*, even though it mainly contains his father's recollections and ideas. It is an invaluable source of information about the business world of early Tokugawa Japan and the values and experiences of the merchants who were part of it.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is the message of the source concerning the ideal qualities of a successful merchant?
2. What is likely to lead to business failure?
3. What does the source reveal about the level of commercialization in the Japanese economy?
4. What perspectives does the source offer concerning the merchant's place in Japanese society, in particular the relationship of merchants to the daimyo and samurai?
5. What differences and similarities do you see between the ideal merchant described by the Mitsui and the ideal merchant of Ming China described by Wang Daokun (Chapter 7, source 30)?

QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL MERCHANT

There was a man of Edo rather ill-favored by nature. He had, nevertheless, a considerable fortune. Once when he met with other persons of the same status, they all asked: "What should we do to make money like yourself? Please pass on the formula." Thereupon he replied, "If only you are fond of money, you can do it any time." The people answered that there was no one who was not fond of money. "In that case," the man inquired, "if each of you now had as much money as he wanted, what would you do? I would like to have your reflections on the subject." They each gave their views, that if they had so much money they would put so much aside and with the rest restore their unsightly houses or pay off their debts and so on. "Since this is how you all feel," the man said, "you cannot have money. You actually are planning to spend it before you even have it. I do not worry about the state of my house. Nor do I have clothes made. The only thing I am keen on is money." How truly right these golden words are. This little story should be weighed thoroughly.

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When a deficiency appears in their financial positions, they should own up immediately to their poverty and declare their inability to pay. This should be the time to make plans to stay in business, but what they do is to think first of their reputations and borrow as much as they can to cover up their financial position. When at their wit's end, they are exposed and thus wind up like this [bankrupt]. . . . This is the meaning of the maxim that a bud may be nipped with the hand but if left will later have to be chopped with an axe.

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Whatever business you get your start in, you must always continue to recognize the value of that business and put your heart and soul into

it. Most people, however, when they have made a fortune, with large holdings of gold and silver, forget where it came from and think that the way to make a living is to engage in financing, which does not require many assistants. They leave their former business clerks and think they can live at ease through financing, but it is scarcely possible to make a living as easily as that. There are many examples in this world of people eventually going bankrupt by risking not only their own capital but even borrowed money. After all, though it may be a slower process, if you pay for all your personal expenses out of the profits of the trade in which you originally prospered, regard the money which you have as your stock in trade and work single-mindedly at your own business, it is only natural that as a divine reward your house will continue. . . .

MERCHANTS' MISSTEPS

This business of lending to daimyo is like gambling. Instead of being cut in the first place while they are small, losses become a kind of bait. Using the argument that if further loans are made the original ones will be reactivated, the officials and financial agents of daimyo who raise loans decoy the lenders with specious talk. This is like setting fried bean curd for mice, as the saying has it, and finally they are caught in the trap. They thus incur heavier losses than before. Such being the case, one should give up making loans of this sort. However, no gambler places a bet expecting from the beginning that he will lose. . . . If in lending to daimyo the dealings go according to contract, certainly there is no better business. It does not require a large staff. With one account book and one pair of scales, the thing is settled. This is really genuinely making money while you sleep. As the classical saying goes, however, "for every profit there is a loss." Such a fine business as this is liable to turn out very badly in the end. Consider well that you should never rely on lending to daimyo.

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Samurai employ stratagems with victory as their sole aim. To do so is their military duty. Merchants may think that they can make profits to a reasonable extent and write off their losses. Samurai, however, are the highest of the four social classes, and their officials, who combine cleverness with cunning, see through your tricks and turn the tables on you. As soon as they have what they want out of the other party, they seize control and default. The bamboo spears of merchants, you might say, are pitted against the true swords of samurai, and you are no match for your adversary. As lending to daimyo is such an unreasonable business from the start, who would invest his precious money in it? . . . In books on military strategy, it is said that only he who knows the enemy as well as his own side can be called a great general. Any merchant who tries to trick samurai does not know his enemy.

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Many in times both past and present have ruined their families through becoming involved in speculative ventures. In Edo, by so-called gold extraction,¹ or the smelting of gold from copper, people obtained some gold from bar copper and showed it to amateurs, whom they tricked into putting a lot of money into the idea. Eventually those "gold extractors" absconded with the money they had raised. They say that a little gold generally can be extracted by processing copper. If the cost of charcoal and laborers is taken into account, however, it hardly provides a living. I am told that in Holland they do smelt gold from copper. In Japan, though how to do this is known, it does not pay for the above reason, and so the copper is handed over as it is.

As regards gold mines, they say that small amounts of gold and silver exist everywhere but that the mining of them is not a commercial

proposition because, as with the extraction of gold from copper, the yield is too small. Despite this, just because someone shows them something supposed to be ore from a mine and talks glibly, there are many people about who, being somewhat rash by nature, are ready to risk everything and, finally being talked into it, and by losing what little they had.

THE MERCHANT'S PLACE IN SOCIETY

The Jūemon I and Jūemon II² possessed many fine household articles which they had bought. One of these was the "Misoya Katatsuki" tea container, which was bought from Kameya someone or other for a thousand gold pieces. They say the purchase money was loaded on a cart and dragged around in broad daylight to make the payment and take delivery.

Jūemon II built a Zen temple at Narutaki, on the western side of Kyoto. He deposited with the temple an image of Hitomaro³ and built for it a hall called Hitomaro Hall. The interior of this he lined with gold brocade. It is commonly known as the Gold Brocade Hall of Narutaki. Through his interest in Japanese poetry, he, though a merchant, mixed with distinguished Court nobles, forgot the real nature of his status and finally lost his large fortune. He was one who did not know his proper station.

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Again, a merchant called Ishikawa Rokubei, of Edo, who started off in the brokerage business, had a wife who was extraordinarily extravagant and went to the limit in finery. Retribution finally caught up with them. Along the route of the valiant, when this Rokubei's wife and her servants were all decked out, the valiant prince,

¹The process of extracting gold or silver from copper ore by smelting it with the addition of lead was introduced to Japan by Europeans in the late sixteenth century.

²"Jūemon I" is Itoya Jūemon, a Kyoto-based rice trader. "Jūemon II" and "Jūemon III" were his son and grandson, respectively.

³Kakinomoto Hitomaro was a famous poet of the late seventh and the early eighth centuries venerated as the God of Poetry.

thinking that she was the wife of a daimyo or of some family of high rank, graciously had his aides make inquiries and was told that she was the wife of that fellow [the merchant]. After he had returned to the palace, Rokubei and his wife were summoned to the office of the town magistrate. It was considered that their extravagance beyond their station and particularly their lack of respect for their superiors were outrageous. Their family property was forfeited, and, by the Shogun's mercy, they got off with banishment from Edo.

As they say, a curse always falls on the house where the hen does the crowing. If a wife is extravagant in defiance of her husband and runs the household just as she likes, it is the same as for a hen to crow the time. This must be the meaning of the golden words which say that such a house invariably perishes. . . .

THE MERCHANT'S CALLING

. . . When great men are extravagant, they lose their territories, but lesser folk lose their liveli-

hood. Even if one cannot add further profits to the money which one's forebear, acquiring merit through difficulties, accumulated by sweating away at money-making day and night, one at least should reflect on the debt of gratitude owing to one's forebear and take good care to keep his fortune intact. What can we say of one who does neither of these things and finally ruins his family through extravagance! Losses through miscalculation in trading, as well as losses in financial operations, may be due to insufficient concentration of one's proper calling. This is your livelihood, however, and as such cannot be shirked. Understand thoroughly that these things are only matters of prudence. . . . It is the law of nature that birds and beasts and in fact all things which dwell between heaven and earth — and above all, human beings — should seek their sustenance by working at their callings. This being so, such behavior on the part of people far from being in their dotage displays ignorance of the will of heaven.

The Social Ills of Tokugawa Japan



58 ▼ *Honda Toshiaki,*

A SECRET PLAN OF GOVERNMENT

Honda Toshiaki, born in northern Japan in 1721, was a perceptive critic of late Tokugawa society and a prophet of Japan's future. After studying and teaching mathematics, astronomy, and fencing in Edo, he devoted most of his life to observing and analyzing the state of contemporary Japan. In his travels he was particularly interested in observing conditions among the poor and learning the reasons for their misery. He concluded that as a small island nation, Japan needed to expand its commerce and colonize, rather than concentrate on agriculture, as a large continental country like China could do. In his view Japan's seclusion policy should be abandoned and efforts made to teach the Japanese modern navigation and weaponry. Honda publicized his ideas to students and correspondents, but his influence on Japan's political leaders came only after his death. His only government service was as advisor to the lord of Kaga, a minor daimyo. In 1821 he died in Edo.

Honda's *A Secret Plan for Government*, written in 1798, is his most important work. In it he elaborates an economic and political plan for Japan based on what

he called the “four imperative needs” — to learn the effective use of gunpowder, to develop metallurgy, to increase trade, and to colonize both nearby islands and distant lands. The following excerpt comes at the end of a long discourse on Japanese history in which Honda analyzes the roots of Japan’s problems.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What is Honda’s view of the daimyo? How does it compare to Mitsui’s views of the daimyo?
2. How do merchants contribute to Japan’s problems, according to Honda?
3. How does Honda justify his assertion that fifteen-sixteenths of all Japanese rice production goes to the merchants? Are his arguments plausible?
4. Why is Europe rather than China the better model for Japan’s revival, according to Honda?
5. What Confucian influence is evident in Honda’s *Plan*? In what ways does Honda reject Confucianism?

Not until Tokugawa Ieyasu used his power to control the strong and give succor to the weak did the warfare that had lasted for three hundred years without a halt suddenly abate. Arrows were left in their quivers and spears in their racks. If now, in a time of peace, the country were ruled in accordance with the four imperative needs, the prices of all commodities would be stabilized, and the discontent of the people would thus be cut off at the root. This is the true method of establishing a permanent foundation for the nation, so that the people will become honest in their hearts and cultivate orderly ways even if they are not governed. It must have been because he realized how difficult it would be to preserve the empire for all ages to come if the people were not honest in their hearts that Ieyasu, in his testament, exhorted shoguns who would succeed him to abstain from any irregularities in government, and to rule on a basis of benevolence and honesty. It was his counsel that the shoguns should serve as models to the people, and by their

honesty train the people in the ways of humanity and justice. He taught that the shogun should not compel obedience merely by the use of force, but by his acts of benevolence should keep the nation at peace. . . .

He taught the daimyo that the duties of a governor consisted in the careful attempt to guide the people of their domains in such a way as both to bring about the prosperity of the land and to encourage the literary and military arts.

However, in recent days there has been the spectacle of lords confiscating the allocated property of their retainers on the pretext of paying back debts to the merchants. The debts do not then decrease, but usually seem rather to grow larger. One daimyo with an income of 60,000 *koku*¹ so increased his borrowings that he could not make good his debts, and there was a public suit. The court judgment in the case was said to have been over 1,180,000 *ryo*.² Even if repayment had been attempted on the basis of his income of 60,000 *koku*, the debt would not have

¹A *koku* is approximately five bushels of rice and was used to measure daimyo income.

²A measurement of the weight of gold.

been completely settled for fifty or sixty years, so long a time that it is difficult to imagine the day would actually come.

All the daimyo are not in this position, but there is not one who has not borrowed from the merchants. Is this not a sad state of affairs? The merchant, watching this spectacle, must feel like a fisherman who sees a fish swim into his net. Officials of the daimyo harass the farmers for money, which they claim they need to repay the daimyo's debts, but the debts do not diminish. Instead, the daimyo go on contracting new ones year after year. The officials are blamed for this situation, and are dismissed as incompetent. New officials then harass and afflict the farmers in much the same way as the old ones, and so it goes on. However talented the officials may be, they become disgusted and abandon the effort. Some pretend sickness and remain in their homes; others are indiscreet and die young.

No matter how hard the daimyo and their officials rack their brains, they do not seem to be able to reduce the debts. The lords are "sunk in a pool of debts," as it is popularly said, a pool from which their children and grandchildren will be unable to escape. Everything will be as the merchants wish it. The daimyo turn over their domains to the merchants, receiving in return an allowance with which to pay their public and private expenses. Such daimyo give no thought at all to Heaven, to fulfilling their duties as samurai, or to the proper way of looking after the farmers.

Many fields have turned into wasteland since the famine of 1783, when thousands of farmers starved to death. Wherever one goes . . . , one hears people say, "There used to be a village here. . . . The land over there was once part of such-and-such a county, but now there is no village and no revenue comes from the land." . . . When so many farmers starved, reducing still further their already insufficient numbers, the amount of uncultivated land greatly increased. If the wicked practice of infanticide, now so prevalent, is not stopped, the farming population will dwindle until it tends to die out alto-

gether. Generous protective and relief measures must be put into effect immediately if this evil practice is to be stamped out.

A wise ruler could end this practice in short order and create an atmosphere favorable to the prosperity of the nation by establishing a system based on generosity and compassion. When a woman of one of the lower classes becomes pregnant, a government agent should be sent to investigate the situation. The mother of the child should then be given two sacks of rice each year from the month the child is born until he is ten years old. The practice of infanticide would soon stop. Thus by spending a mere twenty sacks of rice over a period of ten years, the country would at the same time gain a good farmer and atone for the misery caused in the past. . . .

The Confucian scholars of ancient and modern times have talked a great deal about benevolence and compassion, but they possess neither in their hearts. Officials and authorities talk about benevolent government, but they have no understanding of what that means. Whose fault is it that the farmers are dying of starvation and that good fields are turning into wasteland? The fault lies entirely with the ruler. . . .

▷ There follows an enthusiastic but often inaccurate account of Europe's accomplishments.

Because astronomy, calendar making, and mathematics are considered the ruler's business, the European kings are well versed in celestial and terrestrial principles, and instruct the common people in them. Thus even among the lower classes one finds men who show great ability in their particular fields. The Europeans as a result have been able to establish industries with which the rest of the world is unfamiliar. It is for this reason that all the treasures of the world are said to be attracted to Europe. There is nowhere the Europeans' ships do not go in order to obtain the different products and treasures of the world. They trade their own rare products, superior

implements, and unusual inventions for the precious metals and valuable goods of others, which they bring back to enrich their own countries. Their prosperity makes them strong, and it is because of their strength that they are never invaded or pillaged, whereas for their part they have invaded countless non-European countries. . . .

There is no place in the world to compare with Europe. It may be wondered in what way this supremacy was achieved. In the first place, the European nations have behind them a history of five to six thousand years. In this period they have delved deep into the beauties of the arts, have divined the foundations of government, and have established a system based on a thorough examination of the factors that naturally make a nation prosperous. Because of their proficiency in mathematics, they have excelled also in astronomy, calendar making, and surveying. They have elaborated laws of navigation such that there is nothing simpler for them than to sail the oceans of the world. . . .

In spite of this example, however, the Japanese do not look elsewhere than to China for good or beautiful things, so tainted are the customs and temperament of Japan by Chinese teachings. Japanese are therefore unaware of such things as the four imperative needs, since they do not figure in the teachings of the Chinese sages.

China is a mountainous country that extends as far as Europe and Africa. It is bounded by the ocean to the south, but water communication within the country is not feasible. Since it is impossible to feed the huge population of cities when transport can be effected only by human or animal strength, there are no big cities in China away from the coast. China is therefore a much less favored country than Japan, which is surrounded by water, and this factor shows in the deficiencies and faults of Chinese state policies. China does not merit being used as a model. Since Japan is a maritime nation, shipping and

trade should be the chief concerns of the ruler. Ships should be sent to all countries to obtain products needed for national consumption and to bring precious metals to Japan. A maritime nation is equipped with the means to increase her national strength.

By contrast, a nation that attempts to get along on its own resources will grow steadily weaker. . . . To put the matter more bluntly, the policies followed by the various ruling families until now have determined that the lower classes must lead a hand-to-mouth existence. The best part of the harvests of the farmers who live on the domains of the empire is wrenched away from them. The lords spend all they take within the same year, and if they then do not have enough, they oppress the farmers all the more cruelly in an effort to obtain additional funds. This goes on year after year. . . .

It is a great shame that such conditions prevail, but it is said that "even the thoughts of an ant may reach up to Heaven." Though their conditions differ, the highest and the lowest alike are human beings, and the rulers ought to think about those who are less fortunate than themselves. Soon all the gold and silver currency will pass into the hands of the merchants, and only merchants will be deserving of the epithets "rich" and "mighty." Their power will thus grow until they stand first among the four classes. When I investigated the incomes of present-day merchants, I discovered that fifteen-sixteenths of the total income of Japan goes to the merchants, with only one-sixteenth left for the samurai. As proof of this statement, I cite the following case. When there are good rice harvests at Yonezawa in Dewa or in Semboku-gun in Akita³ the price is five or six *mon* for one *sho*.⁴ The rice is sold to merchants who ship it to Edo, where the price is about 100 *mon*, regardless of the original cost. At this rate, if one bought 10,000 *ryos* worth of rice in Dewa, sent it to Edo, and sold it there, one's capital would be increased to 160,000 *ryo*. If the

³Dewa and Akita are provinces in northern Honshu.

⁴A *mon* was a copper coin; a *sho* was about 3.2 pints.

160,000 ryo in turn were used as capital, the return in Edo would be 2,560,000 ryo. With only two exchanges of trade it is possible to make enormous profits.

It may be claimed that of this sum part must go for shipping expenses and pack-horse charges, but the fact remains that one gets back sixteen times what one has paid for the rice. It is thus apparent that fifteen-sixteenths of the nation's income goes to the merchants. In terms of the production of an individual farmer, out of thirty days a month he works twenty-eight for the merchants and two for the samurai; or, out of 360 days in a year, he works $337\frac{1}{2}$ for the merchants and $22\frac{1}{2}$ for the samurai. Clearly, then, unless the samurai store grain it is impossible for them to offer any relief to the farmers in years of famine. This may be why they can do no more than look on when the farmers are dying of starva-

tion. And all this because the right system has not been established. It is a most lamentable state of affairs that the farmers have to shoulder the weight of this error and die of starvation as inevitably as "water collecting in a hollow."

By means of the plans outlined in the account of the four imperative needs . . . the present corrupt and jejune society could be restored to its former prosperity and strength. The ancient glories of the warrior-nation of Japan would be revived. Colonization projects would gradually be commenced and would meet with great success. A capital city would be built . . . for northern Japan. The central capital would be at Edo, and the southern one at Osaka. The capital of the entire nation would alternate among these three locations. Then, under enlightened government, Japan could certainly be made the richest and strongest country in the world.

The Opening of Oceania

Slowly, in a process that began as long as forty thousand or even sixty thousand years ago when people from Asia reached Australia and ended only in 900 C.E. when the Maori settled New Zealand, human beings populated the thousands of islands that stretch across the South Pacific from Asia to the Americas. The details of this process are dimly understood, but one thing is certain: Once established, these island societies existed in isolation from the rest of the world until the 1700s. The single exception is the Chamorro people of Guam and the Marianas, islands that were conquered and occupied by the Spaniards in the late 1600s to serve as refreshment stations for their galleons sailing between Mexico and the Philippines. Elsewhere, even in Australia, which is not far from the East Indies or even the Southeast Asian mainland, native Australians had no documented contact with outsiders from approximately 8000 B.C.E. until the arrival of the Dutch explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman in 1642. Tasman and his backers, the Dutch East India Company, concluded that the island had few economic prospects, and the next outsiders to visit Australia were Englishmen under the command of Captain James Cook, who claimed the subcontinent for Great Britain in 1770.

Cook's Pacific voyages, which between 1770 and 1779 took him to Tahiti, New Zealand, Hawaii, and dozens of other Pacific islands, initiated a new era of European and U.S. colonization in Oceania. Although glossed over in many histories, it is nonetheless an interesting and significant story. Because the Western move into the Pacific was rapid and on a comparatively small scale, it provides sharp insights into the complex phenomenon of Western expansion. One extreme is

represented by the seal hunters who were among the first Westerners attracted to New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania. Their slaughter of seals was so furious that the seal population was all but exterminated within a generation. Their treatment of the Maori and Aborigines was not much different. They kidnapped and sexually abused the women, enslaved the men, and subjected both to brutal punishment or death for minor acts of theft or disobedience. When the seals were gone, most of the hunters moved on.

On the other extreme were the missionaries, many of whom came from Protestant lands such as England, where a strong missionary spirit took hold later than in Catholic Spain, Portugal, and France. These missionaries were sincere idealists who endured great hardship to carry Christianity and what they perceived as the benefits of civilization to the “less fortunate” pagans of the Pacific islands. Yet the germs they carried in their bodies and the ideas they carried in their minds were lethal to the peoples they encountered, no matter how noble their intentions. The missionaries from the West did a measure of good but, like the sealers, also a measure of harm.

Early Reports from New Zealand



59 ▼ *Committee of the Church of England Missionary Society, MEMORANDUM TO THE EARL OF BATHURST, SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE COLONIES*

The islands that make up modern New Zealand were uninhabited by humans until the Maori, a Polynesian people, arrived during the ninth century C.E. They numbered approximately 250,000 when the Dutch explorer Abel Janszoon Tasman visited in 1642. More than a century later, after the Englishman James Cook charted the islands in 1769, whalers and sealers from Australia, Europe, and the United States were drawn to New Zealand's shores, and permanent settlers soon followed. Clashes between the Maori and the settlers, many of whom were former convicts from the English penal colony of Australia, soon began.

Missionary efforts in New Zealand sponsored by the Church of England began in 1814 under the direction of Reverend Samuel Marsden (1764–1838), the son of a blacksmith. As a young man Marsden abandoned his studies at Cambridge University to minister to convicts who had been shipped to Australia. When he shifted his activities to New Zealand, Marsden and his assistants had three goals: to protect the Maori from abuse, to teach them agricultural and craft skills, and to convert them to Christianity.

As the following letter written in 1817 shows, Marsden and the other ministers faced formidable obstacles. Massacres of the Maori and other abuses prompted

British government intervention but also more resistance from the Maori. Conversions came slowly, and a series of bloody wars was fought against the Maori before they acquiesced to English rule. The Maori survived their encounter with the Europeans. Today they number approximately three hundred thousand and comprise 10 percent of New Zealand's population. Some of them are Christians.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How do the authors view the intellectual and moral capacities of the Maori?
2. What solutions do the authors suggest to end the abuses they describe?
3. How does the document depict Maori attitudes toward the Europeans?
4. On the basis of the examples cited, what were the causes of the conflicts between the Maori and Europeans?

The memorial¹ of the Committee of the Church of England Missionary Society for Africa and the East humbly sheweth, —

That the Church Missionary Society has been engaged for eight years in endeavoring to propagate the knowledge of the Christian religion among the idolatrous nations of Africa and the East, and thereby to promote their civilization, as well as their spiritual and eternal welfare.

That in the prosecution of these designs the Society has directed its attention to the inhabitants of the islands of the South Seas, and especially to those of New Zealand, whose active and intelligent character appeared to offer a favorable field for their exertions. In the course of the year 1814, having obtained a grant of land from one of the chiefs of the country, the Society established a settlement in the Bay of Islands in New Zealand, at which three missionary settlers, with their families, have been since resident.

That the efforts of these settlers, as far as it has been possible hitherto to extend them, have been attended with most encouraging success. They have found the natives in the vicinity of a frank and affectionate character, desirous to cultivate their friendship, and to receive instruction, and

the Society entertain a confident hope that by the establishment of schools and by other means of instruction they shall in due time be enabled, under the Divine blessing, to diffuse the knowledge of Christianity throughout this populous and benighted land, and to rescue a noble race of men from the horrible superstitions and savage customs by which they are now degraded. The Society feels warranted also to hope that its exertions will tend in other ways to meliorate the condition of the islanders. Their settlers have already introduced among them the cultivation of wheat and other grain, and a foundation may perhaps be thus laid for the agricultural improvement of this fertile and productive country, which may hereafter render it not an unimportant object of commercial attention.

That the hopes which your memorialists thus entertain have been greatly checked by the intelligence continually received by them of the atrocities committed by the European traders in the South Seas, by which not only the most grievous injuries are inflicted on the natives, but their minds are exasperated to acts of barbarous revenge, all tendency to a milder and more civilized character is repressed, confidence in the character and designs of the European settlers is

¹A statement of facts addressed to a government, often accompanied by a petition or request.

weakened, and the lives of themselves and their families are seriously endangered. . . .

In the year 1810 the ship *Boyd* sailed from Port Jackson to Whangarooma in New Zealand with some natives on board, one of them the son of the head chief of the place. These persons were very ill used during the voyage. The young chief, who had fallen sick and was unable to work as a sailor, was severely flogged, treated with great indignity, and sent on shore, lacerated with stripes. When the treatment which he had received became known to his friends and people it roused them to fury; they seized the ship, and put the captain and all the crew to death. Soon after this Tippahee, a chief belonging to the Bay of Islands, and who was well known and respected at Port Jackson, was accused of having been concerned in the massacre. In consequence of this report, the whalers, who were on the coast, manned and armed seven boats, landed on the island of Tippahee, and shot every man, woman, and child that came in their way. Tippahee was severely wounded. It has since been ascertained that this chief so far from being guilty of the crime imputed to him, he exerted himself to save the lives of the crew. His people must have been known to be guiltless, for their territory was forty miles distant from Whangarooma; yet thus have the unoffending inhabitants of a whole island been exterminated by a lawless act of private vengeance.

A year or two before this the captain of an English ship which was sailing by one of the islands fired, without any provocation, five or six large guns, loaded with grape shot, among a multitude of natives, men, women, and children, who were assembled on the beach to look at the vessel, and killed and wounded several of them. When remonstrated with for this act of wanton barbarity he only said it was necessary to strike terror into the minds of these natives, and convince them of what power we possessed.

In 1812 the schooner *Parramatta* put into the Bay of Islands, in distress, for provisions and water. She was supplied by the natives with potatoes, pork, and fish to the extent of their wants, and when they required payment they were thrown overboard, fired at, and wounded. The schooner immediately weighed anchor, but was soon after driven on shore in a storm, and the islanders revenged themselves by putting the crew to death.

In the same year the brig *Daphne* was off the Island of Riematerra when eighteen natives came off in three canoes with fruit; they were invited on board, behaved in the most friendly and respectful manner, and delivered their cargoes of supplies, for which they received a trifling remuneration. The captain then ordered the crew to turn them out of the ship; this was done in the most barbarous manner; they were beaten with ropes to force them over the sides of the ship into the sea; they swam to their canoes, which were swamped, and fourteen of them were drowned within sight of the brig. . . .

That your memorialists will not dwell on the various instances in which potato grounds (the chief culture of these islands) have been destroyed, and the produce stolen; in which the property of the natives has been forcibly taken or fraudulently obtained, under presence of purchase, and no equivalent given; in which their chiefs have been imprisoned and ill treated in order to extort a ransom; and all these misdeeds too often accompanied by circumstances of wanton cruelty.

That in a recent case proceedings have been instituted at Port Jackson² against the captain of a trading vessel for acts of oppression and cruelty against the chiefs and other natives of one of the Marquesas Islands,³ in which after a full investigation a conviction took place on the whole of the charges; but the party convicted has escaped with impunity, on account of the

²Sydney's original name.

³An island group just south of the equator and to the east of Hawaii.

inadequacy of the powers vested in the Magistrates to punish the offence.

That your memorialists are informed that there is no competent jurisdiction in New South Wales for the cognizance and punishment of such offences as have been enumerated, nor any adequate means for their prevention; and that no remedy at present exists but sending persons charged with the perpetration of such enormities to be tried at the Admiralty Sessions in England.⁴ . . .

That even the establishment of a tribunal with adequate power of punishment in New South Wales would not in all cases be effectual to remedy the evil, since it frequently happens that the vessels whose captains and crews have committed these atrocities do not return thither, and that some further measure seems therefore req-

uisite for the protection of the islanders, and the prevention of the crimes by which the moral character of Great Britain is degraded by the conduct of her subjects trading in those seas.

That, in consequence of the want at present of any sufficient provision by colonial tribunals or otherwise for the prevention or the punishment of crimes committed in the islands of the South Seas, your memorialists submit that not only the lives of the missionaries and settlers in those islands are exposed to the most imminent hazard, but that all endeavors to extend the blessings of Christianity and civilization among the natives must thereby be in a great measure frustrated, and the reasonable hope of advantage which might be derived therefrom even to our own country is destroyed.

⁴An English court that handled cases involving ships on the seas.

The Plight of the Tasmanians



60 ▼ *George A. Robinson,* *REPORT TO THE LIEUTENANT* *GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF TASMANIA*

The island of Tasmania, off the southeastern coast of Australia and about the size of West Virginia, was first inhabited by humans twenty thousand years ago when a land bridge connected it to the Australian mainland. When the seas rose ten thousand years later, the bridge disappeared, and the Tasmanian Aborigines were isolated until the arrival of Europeans in the seventeenth century. Hunters and gatherers who were organized into approximately ten tribes, the Tasmanian Aborigines numbered three to four thousand around 1800.

In the early nineteenth century Australian, English, and American sealers established themselves on the northern shore, and English officials began sending convicts to three new penal colonies. Conflicts with the Aborigines erupted immediately over such issues as kangaroo hunting and soon intensified when farmers and sheepherders took over much of the island in the 1820s. By 1830 Tasmania supported nearly twenty-five thousand settlers, more than five hundred thousand sheep, but only two thousand Aborigines, whose numbers had been halved by disruption and disease.

In the 1830s English administrators attempted to solve the "Aborigine problem" by forcing them to live in one area where they could be protected, educated,

taught Christianity, and kept out of the way. Many Aborigines were killed resisting captivity, so that only several hundred were shipped to the aboriginal settlement established on Flinders Island, off Tasmania's north shore. There they came under the direction of George A. Robinson, a carpenter who had come to Tasmania in 1824 and had directed the roundup of Aborigines in the early 1830s. A deeply religious man, who viewed the Aborigines as his "brothers in Christ," he honestly believed they would benefit from living on Flinders Island. He wrote the following letter to the lieutenant governor of Tasmania in 1837, three years after the founding of the colony.

None of the letter's optimistic predictions came true. Infection, alcoholism, and poor diet further diminished the Aborigine population, and the colony on Flinders Island was disbanded in the early 1840s. Many whites now believed the Aborigines were beyond redemption. The survivors of Flinders Island were sent to the village of Oyster Cove, where the last full-blooded male Aborigine died in 1868, and the last female, Truganini, died in 1871. Her skeleton was displayed as a scientific curiosity in a Hobart museum until 1947 when public opposition forced the Royal Society of Tasmania to put it in storage. In 1976, after appeals from Tasmanians of mixed Aborigine-European descent, her remains were cremated and scattered on the beach where she had played as a girl.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What encouraging signs does Robinson see in the first years of the Flinders Island colony's existence?
2. What are Robinson's views of the skills and mental capacities of the Aborigines?
3. In Robinson's view, what are the concrete signs that the Aborigines are becoming "civilized"?
4. According to Robinson, what general lessons of colonial policy can be learned from the experience at Flinders Island?
5. Despite the rosy picture Robinson painted of Flinders Island, the colony soon failed. From reading Robinson's letter, what can you surmise about the reasons?

Sir,

I have the honor to submit, for the information of his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor, the subjoined particulars relative to this experimental and interesting institution, since the transmission of my previous report; and I have much satisfaction in stating that this settlement continues as heretofore in a very quiet and tranquil state, and that the same order and regularity is maintained as mentioned on former occasions. . . .

I have much satisfaction in stating that the wants of the aborigines are amply and abundantly supplied, and that the provisions furnished by the Government are of the best description; and though, notwithstanding, the fatality to which I have heretofore alluded is of painful character, still it must be conceded that the same is quite providential, and might have occurred in their own native districts; . . . and hence, amid the calamity that has happened, it is a pleasing reflection to know that everything has been done

which ingenuity could devise or humanity suggest to alleviate their condition, and of which the aborigines themselves have marked their appreciation, and oft repeated their acknowledgements for . . . the kind intention of the Government towards them.

The advantages to the aborigines by their removal have been manifold, and many of them of the highest order. In their native forests they were without the knowledge of a God, hence but little removed from the brute themselves. Their mode of life was extremely precarious, and to the juveniles distressing in the extreme; and though in their insidious and deadly attacks on the white inhabitants they invariably eluded pursuit, yet they themselves were not without dangers and alarms, and might reasonably be said to exist by excitement alone. . . . Anterior to their arrival . . . they were in a deplorable state of mental degradation. Such is not now the case: they not only possess the knowledge of a Deity, but are acquainted with the principles of Christianity.

From the time I first took charge of the settlement, now near two years since, religious knowledge has been daily imparted to them, and religious principles inculcated. In this laudable object the whole of the officers and my family have untirelessly assisted, a duty in which they have evinced the greatest aptitude and delight; and I myself can testify with what avidity and eagerness they have attended to and sought after religious knowledge. . . .

DOMESTIC ECONOMY

Their time is wholly employed in useful labor, harmless amusements, in their attendance at school, and religious exercises, and not, as heretofore, wandering about the settlement with listless and careless indifference to what was going on; but on the contrary, evinced by their general conduct, their prompt attention to instruction, and their persevering industry, that they have an interest in the affairs of the settlement, and

which it has ever been my aim on all occasions to bring them to participate. They are no longer idle spectators, but actors and ready agents to assist, as far as strength and ability will permit, in every useful undertaking.

I have already alluded to their proficiency in useful arts, viz. knitting and fancy network, and though from the paucity of their numbers the manufacture cannot be done to any great extent, still in whatever light we view it, whether as a branch of useful industry, or as an amusement, one thing is certain, that it displays a precocity of intellect of no ordinary kind, and proves that those whom civilized men despised as beings without mind, are, like all God's creatures, perfect in every form, and which only requires the adoption of proper means, when the latent intellect of the degraded savage will be made manifest, and be developed.

There are many and numerous incidents that might be cited to mark their improvement in domestic economy: suffice to say, they are not now, as formerly, content to sit upon the ground, but require seats, both as an article of convenience and a preservation from soiling their clothes. Those among them who have knives and forks habitually use them, and which the residue are anxious to possess; they now also confine themselves more closely to their domiciles, and not interchanging or crouching under bushes or lolling about in idleness.

The aborigines are becoming cleanly in their persons; they now perform the necessary ablutions daily, and the greater part of them have shorn beards; they are not now satisfied as heretofore with one garment, *i.e.*, a frock coat, but require trousers also, and their raiment is in general kept in clean and proper order.

The females are equally as anxious to possess clothes of a European fashion. Several pieces of print¹ bought on their account, and sold at the market, were purchased with avidity and manufactured into gowns; they likewise wear under garments, which they keep in clean and good

¹Printed cotton fabric.

order. They now evince great desire for domestic comforts, and which, though amply supplied, can only be attained by industry and good conduct. Their primitive habits are now all but forgotten: the use of ochre² and grease, with which they used formerly to bedaub themselves, is now entirely abolished. Their nocturnal orgies . . . , which hurt the repose of the settlement and impaired the health of the natives, as adverted to in my previous reports, never occur.

ABORIGINAL POLICE

The police of this establishment consists of four special constables, and their two chiefs, to whom the conservation of the aborigines is confided. The constables are chosen from each of the two remnant tribes in full assembly, convened for the occasion.

The constables act under the orders of their chiefs; the latter determine all points of disputes, and on several occasions have displayed tact and judgment highly creditable, and in every instance have administered impartial justice. When this police was first established, it was done as an experiment, and solely with a view to assimilate the natives as much as it was possible to the customs and usages of Europeans. . . .

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

The work of Christian instruction and civilization, which has taken place under the auspices of the local government at this settlement, has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectation,

and has determined a question hitherto deemed impracticable.

If, as is made evident, so much has been effected for a people said to possess so little intellectual capacity, a people reputed to be but one remove from the brute creation, and of whom it was said they were but a link between the human and brute species; if so much has been done for such a people, how much more might be performed with those of a different character; and I do trust that the time is not far distant when the experiment will be tried among the numerous tribes inhabiting New Holland; for from the appalling accounts received, and from what I myself have witnessed, as well as from information heretofore communicated, there appears a prompt necessity that some efficient protection be extended to those ill-used and persecuted people. Humanity, religion, and justice require that every effort should be made on their behalf.

The primeval occupants of Van Diemen's Land³ are not deserving of the obloquy which has been heaped upon them. The hostile feeling evinced by them towards the whites, and their attacks upon the lonely settlement of the colony, are only considered as just retaliation for the wrongs due to them and to their progenitors. They are now well disposed and bear no ill-will or animosity to the white inhabitants. . . .

The effects that have been produced on the minds of these people will forever put to silence the cavils of the most sceptical and prejudicially minded; and if (as I understand) in the sister colony the attempts hitherto brought into operation for the amelioration of the aborigines have failed, it can only be attributed to a defect in the system, and not to the people themselves.

²An earthy clay containing iron ore and usually reddish in color.

³After finding Tasmania in 1642, the Dutch explorer Tasman named it Van Diemen's Land in honor of the

governor-general of the Dutch East India Company in Jakarta.

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Part II ▼ A World of Transformation and Tradition, from the Mid Seventeenth to Early Nineteenth Century

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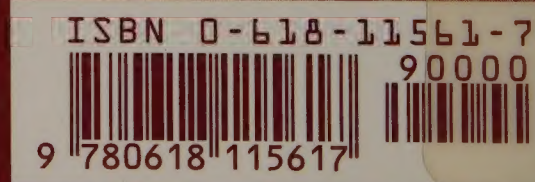


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